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THE FENIAN OUTRAGE.

It is painful to have to write, under the influence of irrepressible indignation, of reckless outrage and wholesale murder at the present season, when one would wish to be on terms of amity with all men, and to see all men at peace with each other. But, in face of late events, for honest men and good citizens to hold their peace is impossible: would, indeed, be both cowardly and a dereliction from social duty. Here, in the city of London—in the metropolis of law-abiding England—has been perpetrated one of the most heinous, most reckless, and most foolish outrages that are to be found in the records of crime. The enormity committed in Clerkenwell on Friday afternoon last week—reckless, because those who planned and carried it out took no heed of the horrible injury to innocent persons by which it might be, and, as the event proved, was attended; and foolish, because,



EFFECTS OF THE EXPLOSION OF THE FENIAN "INFERNAL MACHINE" AT THE HOUSE OF DETENTION, CLERKENWELL, AS SEEN FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE PRISON.

as the event also proved, it was to the last degree uncertain of success in attaining the object aimed at—is not, we fear, to be regarded as an isolated and exceptional act of madness. It is only one out of many of the schemes of a conspiracy of utterly desperate, passion-blinded, muddle-headed men, who neither clearly know what they would be at, nor have calculated the adequacy of the means at their disposal for accomplishing the objects they have in view; who pursue no rational purpose in a rational way; who seek not to amend or improve, but merely to damage and destroy; and who, moreover, care not whom or what they injure so long as they can gratify their diabolical dispositions. Cowardly are they, too; for they strike not merely at the strong and the vigilant, but at the helpless and the unwary. Englishmen can understand and appreciate a fair, up-stand, open fight; and they



VIEW OF THE SCENE OF THE EXPLOSION IN CLERKENWELL, LOOKING DOWN CORPORATION-ROW.

can esteem while they combat a declared and manly foe. But the plotter in the dark, the assassin, and the incendiary they loathe and detest. It is no wonder, therefore, that the tactics to which the Fenians are resorting should evoke a feeling of hatred, and a cry for strong and summary measures, which may be deprecated, but cannot very greatly be either wondered at or condemned.

And what course, indeed, can be taken with miscreants who show themselves so regardless of consequences, so reckless in the agents they employ, and so heedless of human suffering, as are the conspirators who concocted the villainous scheme developed by the proceedings at the Clerkenwell House of Detention, but a rigorous, unflinching, determined policy of "stamping out"? Due process of law must, of course, be followed—no one must suffer till guilt is brought home to him; but, when that is done, no consideration of mistaken lenity must be permitted to stand in the way of meting out to the criminals the meed of punishment their misdeeds merit. Let us tolerate no false sympathy with murderers, lest we thereby give encouragement to murder. We hope Mr. Finlen and others who talked so loudly about their "sympathy" with the Manchester malefactors, and who sought to gain a miserable notoriety for themselves by prating of a patriotism that had no real existence, and which they themselves, at all events, neither felt nor understood—now comprehend (if they are capable of comprehending anything) what are the kind of men, and what the principles and practices, in favour of which they raised their voices so much more loudly than discreetly. If they have "sympathy" to spare now, let them show it in behalf of the innocent sufferers by the explosion of the Fenian infernal-machine: not by blatant bellowings on Clerkenwell-green, at the Home Office, or in Hyde Park, but by subscribing to the fund inaugurated so promptly and so kindly under the auspices of the Rector of Clerkenwell.

Much nonsense has been talked about the heroism of the Fenians, especially of their leaders. But, for our part, we cannot see in what the said heroism consists. The true hero is self-denying and self-sacrificing. But the Fenian leaders have shown themselves willing to purchase safety for themselves at the cost of the lives and limbs of they neither know nor care how many others. Kelly and Deasey are in safety, either skulking in this country or loafing in America—living in ease, idleness, and comfort, careless of the fact that they have the lives of four fellow-creatures on their souls. Call ye that heroism, or patriotism, or aught that right-minded men can applaud? Is it not, on the contrary, the very embodiment of mean, cowardly selfishness? Burke and Casey, we doubt not—their virtuous disclaimers after the failure of the effort on their behalf notwithstanding—would have been content to escape from justice with at least five deaths and almost numberless maimings on their souls, and would have vaunted their heroism, and patriotism, and devotion—when their own persons were as secure as are those of their friends and fellow-conspirators Kelly and Deasey. Heroism! Patriotism! Devotion! Bah! Let us not pollute the words by associating them with the names of such dastardly, selfish miscreants.

We are loth to utter a word of condemnation upon an institution that, as a rule, and in ordinary circumstances, serves the public so well as our police do, particularly as individual members of the force have on this as on other occasions acquitted themselves so creditably. But it is impossible to resist the impression that there is something rotten in the management of our police force, or the outrage in Clerkenwell could never have been perpetrated. The authorities, it seems, had notice *two days before the event* that an attempt would be made to blow up the House of Detention and liberate Burke and Casey, the very day and hour and means almost being indicated; and yet, so far as appears, the only precautions taken were to change the prisoners' exercising-ground and to set a few disguised detectives to watch outside the prison. After the experience of Chester Castle and Manchester such half-and-half measures should have been discarded. A cordon of police or military should have been drawn around the prison so as to make the approach of suspicious characters to its walls impossible. The mere presence of a sufficient force would have deterred the incendiaries from making their diabolical attempt. All communication between the prisoners within and their confederates without should have been cut off, and thus concerted action have been prevented. But, instead of this, suspected persons were allowed to loiter in the neighbourhood, to have free access to the prisoners, and so to arrange and mature their plans at leisure. Who is to blame for this remissness, we know not; but it is a matter that ought to be rigidly inquired into. Then a great fuss was made about consulting as to the safest mode of removing the prisoners, as if that could not have been secured with the utmost possible ease. The means were at hand. A detachment of the Guards was called out to aid in protecting the prison after the danger was over. Could they not as well have been brought into requisition before? and would not a company of those troops, under the command of a competent officer properly instructed, have secured the safe conduct of the prisoners all over London, despite every Fenian and Fenian sympathiser within its bounds? It is this indecision, this half-heartedness, this being wise behindhand, that encourage ruffians to commit crime. Vigorous, bold action, showing that the authorities were both forewarned and forearmed, would, we are persuaded, have saved London from a great disaster and law from being outraged and defied. Why such action was not taken let the Home Office and Scotland-yard answer.

ATROCIOUS FENIAN OUTRAGE.

On the afternoon of Friday week, Dec. 13, a Fenian outrage of the most daring and diabolical character was perpetrated in the heart of the city of London. The House of Detention at Clerkenwell, situated in the neighbourhood of the Sessions House, is an extensive prison in which all remanded prisoners are locked up, and there Burke, the Fenian colonel, and his comrade Casey, who have undergone several examinations at Bow-street, were confined. The police, it appears, who had obtained an inkling that something was about to be done in the way of a rescue, were on the alert, and noticed a number of suspicious-looking persons loitering about, and going in and out of a house in Corporation-lane, which is only separated from the prison wall by a very narrow street of four-storied houses. From the top of these dwellings a view could be gained of the ordinary exercise-ground of the prisoners, and where from two until four o'clock in the afternoon Burke and Casey might have been daily seen, with about 150 others, walking to and fro. Things being ordinarily in this state, the scheme of the Fenians, as proved by the event, was to blow down a portion of the outer walls, and thus give the prisoners egress. For this purpose a large quantity of gunpowder was placed in a 36-gallon beer-cask, which was brought into the street at about twenty minutes to four in the afternoon, upon a truck, under the charge of two men and a woman. The cask was placed against the wall, and one man made off with the truck. The other man then thrust a squib into the bung-hole, fired it, and ran away. An awful explosion, which was heard miles away, followed. It blew down a piece of the wall, making a clean V-shaped gap to the level of the street, the top of the opening being 30 ft. to 40 ft. wide. The suspicious excited had induced the authorities to tell off the prisoners for exercise into an inner courtyard. Had that not been the case a great number of them must have been fearfully injured, as a volley of bricks was driven twenty yards across the exercise-ground with the force of cannon balls, making deep indentations on the opposite wall. The effect of the explosion on the adjacent houses was most disastrous; two were destroyed, five or six terribly shattered, and nearly every pane of glass within a radius of a quarter of a mile shattered. Fifty-two persons, varying in age from two years to eighty-six, are in the hospitals seriously injured; one was killed outright, three more expired in the course of the night, and a fifth—a little girl who was dreadfully lacerated and burnt—has died since.

On the supposition that the prisoners, including Burke and Casey, would have been exercised on Friday at the usual hour, the execution of the plot was well arranged as to time, for ordinarily at a quarter to four, when the outer wall was blown in, the prisoners would have been taking their exercise in the yard within. The result was that the conspiracy signally failed in its object, and that Burke and Casey, in whose behalf it was undertaken, are in stricter custody than before, while not one of the rest of the prisoners sustained any injury. For the moment an alarming incident occurred, but with, happily, no bad result. After the concussion, and after the smoke had cleared away, a crowd of people rushed through the breach in the wall, and surrounded the entrances to the prison. The governor, not knowing their object, bade them disperse. They hesitated, upon which he ordered a volley of musketry, with blank cartridge, to be fired, and the crowd, which had collected from curiosity, taking to their heels, panic-stricken, the ground was cleared of the intruders in less than five minutes.

Three of the persons concerned in perpetrating the outrage were immediately apprehended. Their names are—Timothy Desmond, tailor; Jeremiah Allen, bootmaker; and Ann Justice, apparently the wife of a working man. They were lodged in the House of Detention for the night, in which, besides warders and police, a detachment of the Guards was placed on duty.

An intelligible account has been obtained of the manner in which the crime was committed, and connecting beyond all doubt the two men Desmond and Allen and the woman Justice, now in custody, with the conspiracy. On Friday afternoon, between two and three o'clock, John Moore, the chief warder of the House of Detention, had his attention called by a police-constable to the fact of a man—the prisoner Allen—loitering outside the prison and refusing to go away. He was joined by the woman Justice, who had been in the habit of visiting the Fenian prisoner Casey while under remand, and who had taken his dinner into the prison that very day. They appeared to be reconnoitring the prison. The chief warder had seen the prisoner Allen on the top of one of the adjoining houses, and had observed that he came down and talked to five or six other men. He went to apprise the Governor of the suspicious circumstance, and while he was so engaged the explosion occurred. Ambrose Sutton, a constable in plain clothes of the A reserve division, had been employed to watch the House of Detention outside since Burke and Casey had been confined there. At twenty minutes to four o'clock on Friday he saw the woman Justice and the man Allen near St. James's-walk, which is in the immediate neighbourhood. The woman had been in the House of Detention at one o'clock, and Allen had waited outside. When she came out she joined Allen and conversed with him for some time. Desmond then appeared and took part in the conversation, which lasted over twenty minutes. Towards its conclusion, a third man joined them; and, as they parted, the man who had arrived last pushed against Constable Sutton by accident, and, having begged his pardon, asked him a trifling question, to which the constable, who had thus an opportunity of observing him, replied that he was a stranger to the neighbourhood. With that, the third man walked on; and at the close of the conversation the constable saw Desmond go towards St. James's-walk. He then watched Desmond, and, having seen him go along Corporation-lane, observed him shortly afterwards drawing a truck with a barrel, which he put on the pavement. The constable had followed him up St. James's-walk, where Desmond stopped in the middle for a minute or two, and then went on. The explosion followed, and then he saw Allen and the woman Justice running away very fast. As she approached he seized her, and another officer secured Allen. While Constable Sutton had the woman in custody, he saw Desmond running round the prison wall, and caught him as he was passing with his left hand, which was at that time disengaged, and called on the people passing to help him, which they did, he until then holding Desmond and Justice each with one hand. It will be recollected that the little boy Abbott spoke to seeing, about a quarter to four o'clock, a large barrel close to the wall of the prison, and a man who had left it there cross the road. Shortly afterwards the man returned with a long squib in each hand. One of these he gave to some boys who were playing in the street, and the other he thrust into the barrel. One of the boys was smoking, and he handed the man a light, which the man applied to the squib. The man stayed a short time until he saw the squib begin to burn, and then ran away. It has been supposed hitherto that the man who actually fired the train escaped; but it is now said that a woman who was an eye-witness believes Desmond to be the man. She speaks to the man who applied the fuse wearing a light-coloured hat at the time; and there is this peculiarity in the matter, that when Desmond was arrested he wore a black hat, but on being searched at the House of Detention a light soft hat was found thrust below his waistcoat.

A belief is said to obtain among some military officers who visited the ruins on Saturday that the explosion was caused not by gunpowder, but by nitro glycerine, or some other explosive substance of a kindred character. Others think that the barrel contained petroleum. Six staves of which it is supposed to have been partly composed were found by Police-Inspector Potter on Saturday morning, one of them on the roof of a house about sixty yards distant from the scene of the catastrophe.

It appears that on the afternoon or evening of Thursday week, the day preceding the explosion, both Mr. Pownall, as chairman of the magistrates, and Captain Codd, the Governor of the House of Detention, received a communication, through Sir Richard Mayne, supposed to have come from Dublin to the Home Office, distinctly stating that an attempt would be made on the following day to blow up the prison in order to obtain the release of Burke and Casey, and indicating even the time it would be made—namely, between three and four in the afternoon, when the prisoners were being

exercised. The authorities, therefore, were forewarned, and the event itself proves how trustworthy that information was. The great body of the prisoners were thrown into an indescribable state of alarm by the explosion, and believed the place to be on fire. Terror-stricken, they clamoured to be released, and some, breaking the doors of their cells, escaped into the adjoining corridors. Efforts were made by the warders to appease them, but for some time in vain. Casey was heard at the window of his cell calling on people to come to his rescue, and offering them money as an inducement. At the time of the explosion upwards of forty male prisoners and about eighty women were taking exercise, under the supervision of officers, in separate grounds, at the opposite side of the prison, and they are said to have behaved with much propriety. The damage to the prison from the concussion is very great, there being hardly a window that is not broken.

The place where the outrage was committed has since been visited by many thousands of persons. Indeed, it has been found necessary to put up barricades to shut out the people, who might otherwise have got into danger, the ruins of some of the houses being by no means safe. Her Majesty the Queen has sent a letter of condolence with the sufferers. The Chancellor of the Exchequer last Saturday morning sent his private secretary, Mr. Montagu Corry, with a supply of money to help those who had lost their all in the explosion. Mr. Corry did his work kindly and well, giving liberally to those who most needed it. Her Majesty and other members of the Royal family have sent to the various hospitals where the injured persons are lying to make inquiries as to their condition, and to offer what aid may be needed.

The police authorities have offered a reward of £400 for information which shall lead to the conviction of the ruffians who brought about the explosion; and a free pardon is tendered to anyone concerned in the plot who may give such information, providing that he is not the man who actually fired the gunpowder.

The three prisoners charged with being implicated in the diabolical outrage at the House of Detention were brought to Bow-street Police Court last Saturday afternoon, under a very strong escort of mounted police. As soon as the prison-van arrived at the door of the court the mounted police formed a circle around it, and this was no sooner done than a large number of constables, who had been on duty at the court during the whole of the day, formed an inner guard in line on each side of the door. The prisoners as they stepped from the van passed through this guard of police, and were conveyed to the cells of the court without the slightest difficulty. The crowd collected in front of the court was much larger than that assembled in the earlier part of the day. The prisoners gave the names of Timothy Desmond, Jeremiah Allen, and Ann Justice; and the charge preferred against them was the being concerned, with others not in custody, in the wilful murder of Sarah Hodgkinson, aged thirty-five; William Clutton, aged fifty-five; and a girl named Minnie Abbott, aged eight years, by wilfully and maliciously firing an explosive substance, supposed to be gunpowder, in Corporation-lane, Clerkenwell. The evidence adduced was to the same effect as stated above, and the prisoners were remanded.

The two men, Burke and Casey, to release whom there is no doubt the gunpowder was exploded, were also brought up at Bow-street last Saturday. The evidence of their complicity in the Fenian plot was strong. At a previous examination the prisoners had been defended by Dr. Kenealey. At the outset of the proceedings last Saturday, Dr. Kenealey announced that, after the outrage of the previous night, he would no longer continue to defend the men. He did not believe they were parties to what had been done, but some of their friends who instructed him probably were, and therefore he could not continue in the case. Sir Thomas Henry applauded the course taken by Dr. Kenealey. Both Burke and Casey disavowed any previous knowledge of the outrage, and declared their abhorrence of it.

Inquests are now being held on the bodies of some of the victims. On Tuesday, before Mr. S. Jeant Payne, Inspector Thomson, in answer to a question, stated that immediately after the remand of Burke and Casey (on the day of the outrage), he gave notice to the various police stations at Clerkenwell to look out carefully for any signs of an attack. Two days before a communication had been received that it was likely an attack would be made on the prison. Some necessary precautions had in consequence been taken.

A very crowded meeting was held, on Monday night, at the Parochial School-room, Clerkenwell, over which the senior church-warden presided, to devise means for alleviating the distress caused by the recent Fenian outrage in that district. The meeting was enthusiastic in its sympathy with the object which it was called together to consider. A committee, at the head of which is the Rev. Mr. Maguire, Rector of Clerkenwell, was appointed to receive subscriptions. A large sum has already been received, and during the meeting a cheque was announced, from the Rev. Styleman Herring, for £396 17s. 4d.

It is stated that there have been three attempts to set fire to London since Saturday last, and that in these a certain inflammable liquid has been used. The nature of such attempts not only shows the ferocity and ruthlessness of the perpetrators, but also makes it evident that they have provided themselves with the deadliest weapons which misused science places at the disposal of crime.

A CHRISTMAS CHOIR.

(See Supplement, page 408.)

I DECLARE, it's more like acting a charade than taking a part in public worship. And everything might be so admirably managed, if it wasn't for the airs that a number of forward people give themselves. It's really quite shocking; for my part, I can't help calling it downright profane, and the only satisfaction I have is that I said how it would be from the very first. The practice nights were quite enough for me; when I saw the way some of the choir went on. There's a time for everything, as I said to Mr. Miniver. He's a very jocular person, Mr. Miniver; only I do wish he had a voice a little less powerful, and that he wouldn't sing *forte* when the bass should be piano, especially as he roars into my ear, like—really like a wild beast at the Zoological Gardens. But when I said to Mr. Miniver, there's a time for everything, he replied, "Well, I only wish that our choristers would find out the time for singing the anthems, then, and perhaps they might look out for the time too." Gentlemen are very satirical; but he was justified in his allusion. I know to whom he referred; and really, if that young Mr. Jackman—who is, I understand, one of Mr. Muffey the large outfitter's clerks, but dresses quite like the military, in moustaches and all sorts of things—will make a rule of looking off his book to ogle Miss Petifer through his eye-glass, nothing can be expected but a ridiculous failure. As I said at first, "mark my words"—that was my expression, for I felt deeply—"mark my words," we can't expect a blessing on it if such conduct is encouraged." I have tried to show my disapproval by the expression of my countenance, and on one occasion I even ventured (it was on a practice night) to pinch Miss Petifer. She actually had the indelicate audacity to scream; right in the middle of Mozart's Twelfth; and when that most disagreeable and pretentious Jackman sprang forward ready to catch her in his arms, she pretended the utmost alarm, and went over to his side of the choir. I'm sure the way that girl dresses is an insult to rational and immortal being. No May-day sweep out with Jack-in-the-green could be more conspicuous than she was on our very last meeting; and I know what she'll wear on Christmas Day; for her dressmaker does a little work for me sometimes. Though for the matter of that, her aunt, Mrs. Golightly, is even worse than her. She's a member of the choir, too. Comes to take care of her niece, I suppose. Nobody ever hears her sing. She positively grunts, and I cannot refrain from saying that, to see an aged person decorated with all the ornaments of dress which are only tolerable during the vanity of youth, is a spectacle that seems to me to be degrading to our common nature. I will say this for the two Miss Bonnavays, they are attired with modest simplicity. It is to be regretted that their manners are not always in accordance with those most desirable qualities; but there is a bad example in the choir, and their conduct is often light and

trifling. They are fond of admiration, as, indeed, most young persons are. I have to be grateful for the early training which has kept me free from that dangerous weakness which so readily besets our immature experience. It has worked most mischievously in our choir, and I for one shall not be surprised (I have told Mr. Miniver so) if we fail most signally on Christmas morning. He only laughed, for there is always a tendency to levity in men. I told him so, too; and he replied that, at all events, he hoped there would be no levity in Mendelssohn. I always thought Mr. Miniver a very agreeable person.

AUNT DEBORAH.

Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.

We learn from Paris that the idea of a European Conference upon the Roman question is finally abandoned on account of the negotiations with the principal Powers having failed. In Paris it is stated that a diplomatic rupture between France and Italy is imminent. The revelations made in the Italian Green-book have been most offensive to France; and the Chevalier Nigra comes in for most of the blame.

The relations between France and Prussia are again causing uneasiness; and a correspondence of some sharpness is said to be going on between the two Governments relative to the avowed intention of the Grand Duchy of Baden to annex itself to the North German Confederation, which is viewed by France as an infringement of the provisions of the treaty of Nikolsburg relating to the Maine boundary.

ITALY.

The debates in the Chamber of Deputies on the conduct of the Government during the late crisis still continue, and are characterised by much bitterness against France and by a determination to maintain the national claim to Rome as the capital. Most of the speakers, however, counsel patience and the propriety of waiting for a favourable opportunity before further action is taken.

The official documents published at Florence are utterly at variance with the Ministerial declarations made to the Chambers at Paris. Signor Nigra, for instance, reports to his Government that M. Rouher first suggested the ideas of a joint occupation of the Roman territory and then a conference, whereas M. de Montier asserted that Signor Nigra made these propositions to him. Other discrepancies of equal gravity appear in the declarations of the two Cabinets—with this difference, that while those made at Florence are in the form of despatches exchanged at the time of the occurrences to which they refer, the Ministerial declarations at Paris are *ex post facto*.

SWITZERLAND.

Large popular meetings were held, on Sunday, at Zurich, Winterthur, Uster, and Bulach, at which resolutions were passed in favour of a revision of the Zurich Constitution in a completely democratic sense. During the meeting loud cries of "Down with the present system!" "Away with its supporters!" were uttered.

AUSTRIA.

The Hungarian Diet is working harmoniously with the Reichsrath on the measures relating to the international obligations of the two countries. After a debate which lasted nine days, the bill settling the Hungarian quota of the public debt of the empire was carried by a large majority.

THE UNITED STATES.

We have now the text of the President's Message to Congress. In addition to the points already communicated through the Atlantic cable, the President referred to the negro question, and said that the domination of the negroes over the Southern States would be more disastrous than the military despotism under which these States are at present governed, and pointed out the danger of extending the elective franchise to negroes, remarking that four millions of slaves yesterday cannot be made intelligent freemen to-day. As the further prosecution of the slave trade is not to be apprehended in that part of the world, the President suggests whether the time has not arrived for proposing to our Government a discontinuance of the stipulations for maintaining a naval force for the suppression of that trade.

A resolution has been referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs declaring that no claim of a foreign Government over naturalised citizens of the United States shall affect the right of such citizens to Federal protection, and that the Government shall at all hazard protect naturalised citizens both at home and abroad.

A bill has been reported to the House to repeal the authority granted to the Secretary to the Treasury to contract the currency or cancel the United States notes. A resolution has been offered to the House limiting the assessment of the internal revenue to 300,000,000 dols. annually. The delegates from Kentucky have been admitted to seats in the House.

Mr. Hoffman, a Democrat, has been re-elected Mayor of New York by a majority of 22,000 over the Opposition Democratic and Republican candidates. The Republican vote showed a decrease of 7000.

The *New York Herald* publishes a despatch from Havannah, dated the 12th inst., asserting that Spain has offered to sell the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico to the United States for the sum of 150,000,000 dols.

MEXICO.

It is reported via San Francisco that a revolution had broken out in Durango, headed by Vega. The Mexican troops who were dispatched to quell it were beaten.

The Austrian frigate Novara, with the remains of the Emperor Maximilian, reached Havannah on the 1st inst.

THE CHRISTMAS CATTLE MARKET.—Monday being the great cattle market of the year for Christmas supply, the number of stock sent up from the country for sale was large. The quality was undoubtedly fine, with, in some instances, remarkably good specimens of both breed and feeding, which ought to have been exhibited at the Smithfield Club show. The Aberdeen-shire Deacons were especially good, and the number large. West country beasts or Devons were shorter than usual. Of foreign cattle the supply was small, the season being now over for imports from several of the Continental States. The trade was generally heavy, and prices to the producers very unsatisfactory. All very choice beasts sold readily, but not at more than 5s. to 5s. 2d. per stone the outside; the general run of the best quality being 7d. per lb. Second-rate beasts were a very slow sale, and for such and coarse breeds lower rates had to be submitted to. Good small mutton was dear, but other qualities were very unsalable—the trade, in fact, being remarkably heavy for all but the best quality. It is specially worthy of remark that good beef and mutton are now very moderate in price to the butcher, and it is therefore to be hoped that the public will be fairly dealt with by a fair remuneration being taken, and no more, from the consumer.

FENIAN DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE PROVINCES.—It had been feared that on Sunday there would be disturbances at Liverpool, Leeds, and some other places in England where funeral processions in memory of Allen, O'Brien, and Larkin had been announced. In both Liverpool and Leeds, however, better counsels prevailed. No attempt was made to form processions, and in both towns great precautions had been taken by the authorities, and everything was in readiness to put down any demonstration which might be made. In Liverpool it seems that, had a procession really been made, the Orangemen would have attacked it. A proposed Fenian demonstration at Glasgow appears to have had the heart crushed out of it by monition of the Glasgow police. That intelligence stirred the indignation of the inhabitants to such an extent that persons of all classes flocked to be sworn in as special constables; and the public feeling was so strongly expressed that the Fenians appear to have at once given up the idea of a demonstration. In several places in Ireland funeral processions were intended to have taken place on Sunday; but a proclamation prohibiting them was issued by the Lord Lieutenant, and the demonstrations were abandoned. In some others are to be prosecuted for the part they took in the Martin and some others are to be prosecuted for the part they took in the demonstration of Sunday week in Dublin. Martin appeared on Monday at the Dublin Police Court, with three others, to answer the charge of having taken part in the Dublin demonstration and for using seditious language. Mr. Sullivan, of the *Nation*, and Sir John Gray, who were summoned as witnesses for the Crown, refused to be examined and defied the Government. There was quite a scene in the court.

AN ADVENTURE WITH A BOA CONSTRICTOR.

(From "Aunt Judy's Magazine.")

THE following adventure has come to our knowledge, in which a well-known amateur and collector of reptiles narrowly escaped with his life.

Mr. O—— R——, diplomatically employed by the Government abroad, and residing at the Eternal City, an enthusiastic collector of serpents, was called away from Rome upon subjects connected with his Government, and had to make a rapid journey to Paris. His business being completed, he was free to return at his leisure to the official residence in Rome; and, having arrived at Marseilles, he called upon the captain of the port, to whom both Mr. O—— R—— and his singular passion for reptiles were well known.

In answer to his questions as to the arrival of vessels from any foreign ports with living subjects of natural history, Mr. R—— heard with pleasure that a vessel from Rio de Janeiro had recently anchored, having made a rapid passage, and contained on board a fine specimen of the huge boa constrictor of the Brazils. On making his appearance in the ship, accompanied by his friend, the captain of the port, Mr. R—— at once began to discuss the subject in which he felt so much interest, and found that this serpent had been shipped with no particular directions as to its destination; but simply that, its value being declared and that sum paid down, the boa might become the property of any purchaser.

After an inspection of the scaly monster, duly cared for in his chest and swathed in blankets, Mr. R—— became the possessor of the wished-for prize; and as the steamer for Civita Vecchia, by which he intended to reach Rome, lay at her moorings not far off from the trader from Brazil, the chest and contents were soon transferred, and Mr. R—— and his prize shortly after started.

On arrival at Civita Vecchia, Mr. R——'s position as an agent of the Government made the transfer of himself and luggage from the steamer to the railway for Rome a matter of small delay, and in the due course of travelling he found himself at the gates of Rome.

Leaving his servant in charge of his general luggage, Mr. R—— started in a hired carriage with his Brazilian prize for his residence in the Via——, and on arrival, with the assistance of the coachman of the vehicle, he conveyed the chest and contents to his room, where he was left for the first time in quiet possession of his purchase.

He dragged the chest into the middle of the chamber, and, having fastened the door for fear of interruption, unlocked the chest, and, peeping within the folds of the blanket, contemplated with eager satisfaction the movements of the huge reptile.

But, while he looked and wondered at its vast girth, its huge folds wreathing one within the other, suddenly the head appeared; and, whether from the long confinement, the shaking it had received, or feeling the incipient pangs of hunger (longing for a feast of chicken or tender rabbit), with one sharp hiss the creature slid from its coverings and the shelter of its box, and was in a moment careering round the chamber. Mr. R—— watched with delight and pleasure not to be imagined (except by such an enthusiast) the graceful movements of the beautiful creature, as, now running along the flooring of the room at length, and again throwing its coils around the furniture, it seemed to inspect each and every article separately; whilst its every movement was power, yet horrible in its grace.

Mr. R—— at last observed that the boa, leaving its movements amongst the furniture of the room, suddenly turned, and in a moment was across the apartment; when, resting upon its coils, it reared itself up, and confronted him—its head opposite to his, and its eyes gleaming horribly into his own. It dashed upon him in an instant that the reptile had possibly been kept without food whilst on board, and that, hunger pressing it on obtaining liberty, he himself would be its first victim.

He stood transfixed, but for a moment whilst the perspiration burst from his forehead; and his lonely situation, with the chamber-door secured, and his frightful chance of a terrible death, rose instantly to him. But that one moment only he paused, then threw himself at the snake, and clutched it by the neck with a grasp such as only despair and horror could give.

In that one moment we may faintly imagine, as is said with drowning persons, or those in extreme peril, he lived his life over again; and years were comprised within the retrospective glance of a second. In an instant the coils of the serpent were around his waist, he felt himself lost; but his presence of mind was not wholly gone, and he perceived that the tail of the serpent was in the front. He tore the fold backward, and with nervous despair held it off with his other arm; then, dragging himself away from the folds that were loosened, he dashed the serpent within the chest, and, violently closing it, threw himself, now breathless and horror-struck, upon the lid. Here he sat, not daring to move; for, as he argued, should I do so again I may have to renew this struggle, and no power can save me.

By degrees, as he became composed, he found that he could reach a heavy chair, and with the help of that chair he drew forward another. These he piled upon the chest, adding other portions of furniture. Seeing the key of his chamber, he rushed to the door, unlocked it, and shouted for help. His own servant had but then arrived with his effects, and other help was at hand; so in a short time they approached the chest to remove the reptile into safer quarters.

With assistance came the desire to see how fared the snake. They cautiously lifted the lid; the captive did not stir; they touched the clammy folds, no corresponding writhing was seen. In fine, the serpent was dead—killed by the convulsive clutch with which Mr. R—— in his horror, in his struggle for dear life, had seized it.

On inspection the vertebrae were found to be broken, which accounted for the little exertion Mr. R—— had really seen in detaching the reptile from his body, and which, but for the grip he had taken on the instant, would inevitably have destroyed—his purchaser.

We have heard that the ardour shown by Mr. R—— as a collector of serpents has considerably abated.

AGRICULTURAL USE OF SEWAGE.

THE Metropolis Sewage Company, with the view of proving the influence of sewage in the soil, have had large quantities of sand brought from Maplin, and laid down in beds near Barking; and Mr. J. Chalmers Morton, their agricultural manager, gives the following particulars of the experiments tried, and their results:—

It is not only on the sand plot at the North London outfall that this experience has been obtained. They have there obtained great crops of grass and vigorous plants of wheat, mangold wurtzel, celery, and carrots by the use of sewage poured over about an acre of the Maplin sand, which had been brought up by barge and spread 30 in. deep over a contractor's yard. But, besides this, they have since Lady Day, 1866, been tenants of 200 acres of light and gravelly land at Lodge Farm, two miles from the Barking outfall, and on this, by pumping apparatus, they can deliver sewage at the rate of 300 tons an hour. During the summer of last year about 60 acres of this land were laid out water-meadow fashion, either on the ridge and furrow or, where the slopes are greater, on the catch-water plan. And from 53 acres of Italian rye-grass sown on this land and watered with sewage in this way we have during the past summer cut 2480 tons of grass, which is at the rate of 43 tons per acre. But of these 53 acres 10 were sown this spring (April), and 16½ acres were sown late last autumn (October, 1866), so that only one half the land can be said to have been in full-bearing power when the sewage reached it. And of this, again, at least one half, which had been mown in December last, was nearly destroyed by the sharp frosts of January. These injured plots were immediately re-sown; but they, too, cannot be said to have yielded a full crop this year. Off the remaining 13½ acres, which alone can be said to have been in proper order, we have this summer cut 800 tons of grass, having begun with a crop of 7 tons per acre in the week ending April 6, and having since then taken six other cuttings at intervals of four or five weeks, the whole amounting to 61½ tons per acre. The quantities thus grown were ascertained by every third or fourth load being passed over a weigh-bridge. Half the land from which these great crops have been taken is a very poor and open shallow soil upon a flinty gravel, and the other a better and deeper open soil on the same bed of gravel.

In the production of this grass 300,330 tons of sewage have been used. This is the quantity actually delivered from the receiving-tank for the above extent of land. But it must be noted here again (1) that, owing to the ditches, or carriers, by which it has travelled from the tank being cut into and through a gravelly subsoil, a great deal of it has been wasted on its way to the land; and (2) that no less than 74,000 tons—one fourth of the whole—were delivered during January, February, and the early weeks of March, before the season of growth had set in, and when, therefore, it could produce comparatively little effect. While, therefore, the whole truth is that we have got 2400 tons of grass off comparatively poor soil by the use of 300,000 tons of sewage, I believe that, fairly read, the lesson taught us is that 60 tons per acre (and the quantity taken from that portion of the land which was in good producing order was more than this), or 3200 tons of sewage properly applied. And if we deduct 12 tons of grass per acre (say 700 tons from our area) for the natural and unassisted yield of this soil under an Essex climate, we shall have 2500 tons of grass as the produce of 250,000 tons of sewage. It is plain that if a ton of good grass can be obtained from every 100 tons of London sewage, a handsome revenue will be yet obtained from what now runs to waste at the Barking outfall. That sewage-grown Italian rye-grass is admirable cow food we had ample proof on Lodge Farm during the past summer.

Besides this large extent of Italian rye-grass, small experimental plots in wheat, mangold-wurtzel, and other crops have been sown; and I may add the results to this report, notwithstanding that we cannot attach so much importance to them, because of the small scale on which they have been obtained. Eighteen tons of mangold roots were weighed off rather more than one third of an acre, over which 1100 tons in all of sewage per acre had been poured at three separate times during the summer. This was at the rate of 52 tons per acre—more than twice the quantity obtained on fields close by manured and cultivated in the ordinary way. And a plot of wheat (1 rood and 21 perches) which received three dressings of sewage

when the land was dry in spring and early summer, yielded 15 bushels of grain, which is after the rate of 43 bushels per acre; while, surrounding this plot on two sides of it, 2 roads and 22 perches of similar land, in all respects similarly treated, except only that it had no sewage, yielded 18½ bushels of grain, or at the rate of only 29 bushels per acre.

I will only add that, having had the management of this farm during the past two years, I know the circumstances, and can vouch for the accuracy of this account of them.

THREE CHRISTMAS ANGELS.

BY SHELDON CHADWICK.

THERE are three Angels strewing earth with flowers
At happy Christmas time,
While merry bells are pealing from the towers
Their musical soft chime;
Bells, Christmas bells, their hallowed steps attend,
Faith, Hope, and Charity on earth descend.

He is not far from Heaven whose soul's the shrine
Of Faith, and Hope, and Love;
And he who dies to self gains life divine,
And wears a crown above.
Each heart may be the manger of the birth
Of these celestial messengers to earth.

Faith, Hope, and Charity to all are near,
And to worn eyelids start
The penitent's first feeble prayer—a tear.
A jewel from the heart,
And those whose feet with Life's rough march are sore,
And those who strove and failed, they bless the more.

The lowly shieling and the palace-dome,
Wherever Suffering lies,
Whatever bears the blessed name of Home,
They gladden with their eyes;
And stronger grow the weak and spirit-blind
Whom, clasping in their arms, they closer bind.

"Good will to man—Good will that ne'er shall cease,"
Is their angelic song;
They fly, bright heralds of the Prince of Peace,
So beautiful and strong,
To drop sweet balm in sorrow-stricken souls,
While bells, dear Christmas bells, your music rolls.

And glory in the highest be to Him,
The God of glory shorn,
Within each human heart with sorrow dim
May He again be born!
And that shall be indeed a holy fane
Where Faith, and Hope, and Charity shall reign.

The tender radiance of yon Beacon-star
Shall mirror to the gaze
Of our dear friends who dwell in lands afar,
The English fireside blaze;
And floating in its beams they shall behold
The triune Angels with their feet of gold.

Age shall forget its sorrows in a dream
Of heavenly hope and bliss,
Youth shall be gay with laughter as a stream
Beneath the sunbeams' kiss;
The rich aside the plumes of pomp shall fling,
The poor man be as happy as the King.

Faith is an amaranth of Eden-birth,
Where breakers never roll;
Hope is a Star which shines from heaven to earth,
The beacon of the soul;
And Charity is the golden Sun whose power
Doth warm the lowly weed and stately flower.

Oh, welcome these three Angels! Think, Ah! think,
What promises are lost!
How many a poor but noble soul may sink
Through hopes for ever crost!
Hail Mercy's Shepherd and his halcyon reign;
Bells, Christmas bells, break out in song again.

THE LATE PARIS EXHIBITION.

THE gales which have so recently swept our coasts and left us so many losses to deplore have not passed harmlessly over other places, as our illustration of the wreck of the great conservatory in the reserved garden in the Paris Exhibition will sufficiently testify. In fact, the French capital has suffered very severely in several quarters from the violence of the storms. The gas has been very uncertain, and in several parts of the city was completely extinguished during the raging of the wind, and many chimney-stacks have been overthrown, and great mischief has been occasioned by the falling of tiles and slates. At about eight o'clock on the night of the 1st inst. the storm created great havoc in the reserved garden, completely lifting the glasshouse, shattering its panes to pieces, and bending or breaking the iron rods and supports, which now present an extraordinary appearance, from having been twisted into all sorts of shapes. The damage has been very considerable, the palms and beautiful exotic plants having been irretrievably injured, and some damage has been done to the building of the Exposition itself. The roof of the large restaurant has been taken off, and several minor buildings have suffered very severely. It is estimated that more demolition has been effected by the hurricane than could have been accomplished in less than eight days by the workmen engaged to remove the great building.

This may scarcely be called a reminiscence of the late Exhibition; but there reaches us at the same time one of the few remaining recollections of our Artist of those objects which attracted so much attention. We refer to the national costumes as displayed there by lifelike figures, which were to be met with in every court. Here we have the contrast presented by those groups which under the title of "Oriental" included such varied and almost opposite nationalities. The grave, sententious Arab, half veiled in his haik of camel-hair cloth; the fiery and impulsive Albanian, the Moldo-Wallachian; the Circassian girl, graceful, fair, and sleepy-eyed; the varied mixture of tribe and race which are associated with the groups illustrating the Oriental idea, were all represented in the great show—already a thing of the past; but the summer holiday will be such a grateful theme for talk round a winter fire that a reminiscence of some of its attractions will scarcely be out of place even at Christmas.

THE RUINS OF HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

IN our last week's number we published a pretty full account of the destruction by fire of Her Majesty's Theatre. We now supplement that account by the accompanying Engraving, which shows the immense extent of the devastation. To the details already published we need only add the following official report of the amount of damage done, as rendered by Captain Shaw:—

"Haymarket: Her Majesty's Theatre, the theatre and contents all but destroyed; No. 26, Charles-street, let out in offices, back front damaged by fire, and contents slightly by water; No. 27, J. Graham, solicitor, back front scorched, and contents damaged by removal; Nos. 19 to 24, the Clergy Club and Hotel Company (Limited), skylights and back windows damaged by fire, and contents by water. Waterloo-place, Pall-mall: No. 6, let out in offices, back room, second floor, nearly burnt out, back front severely damaged by fire; contents by fire, water, and removal; No. 5, T. Agnew and Son, printers, and T. Buckland and Son, wine

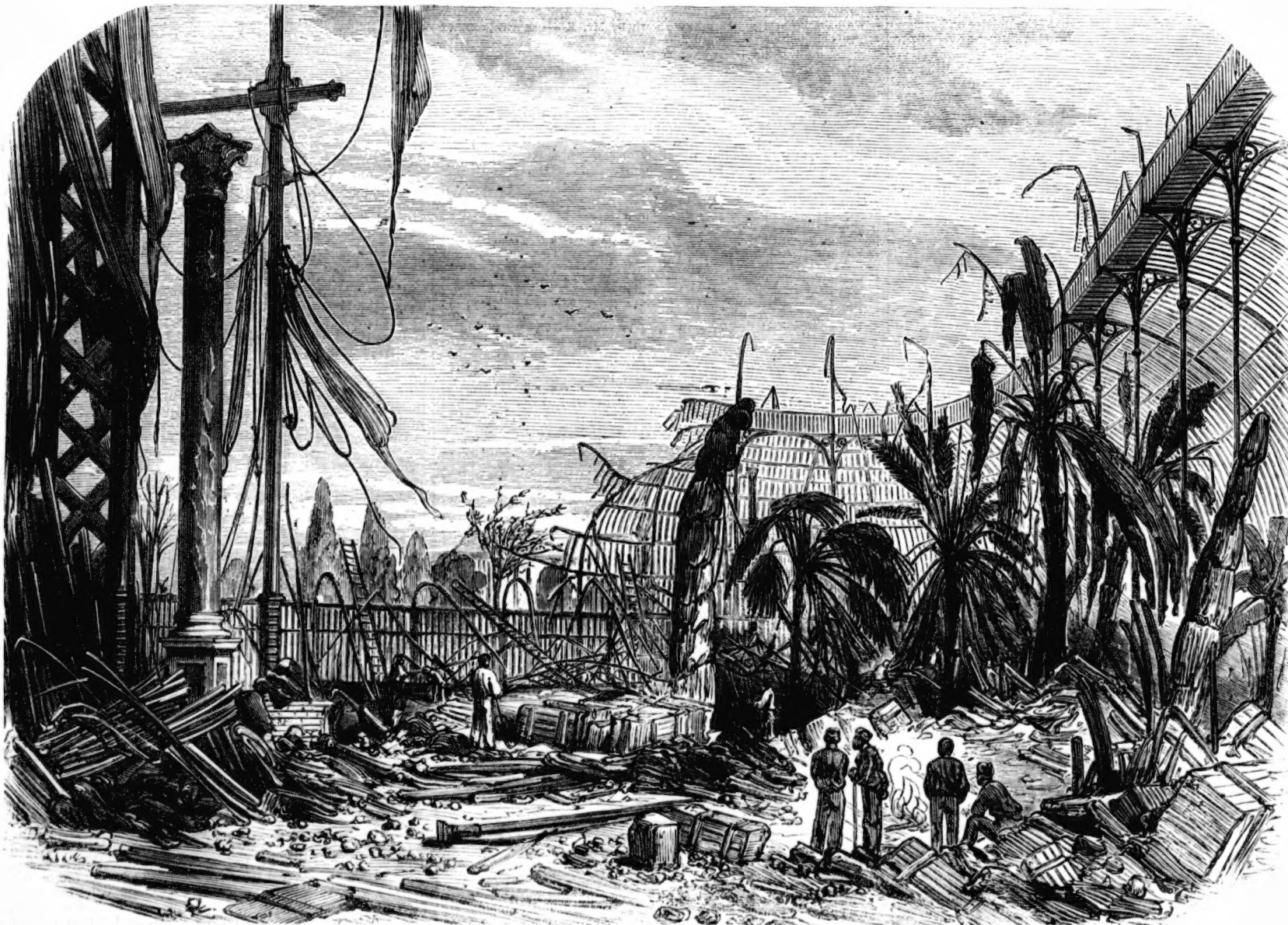


TYPES OF ORIENTAL COSTUMES AT THE LATE PARIS EXHIBITION.

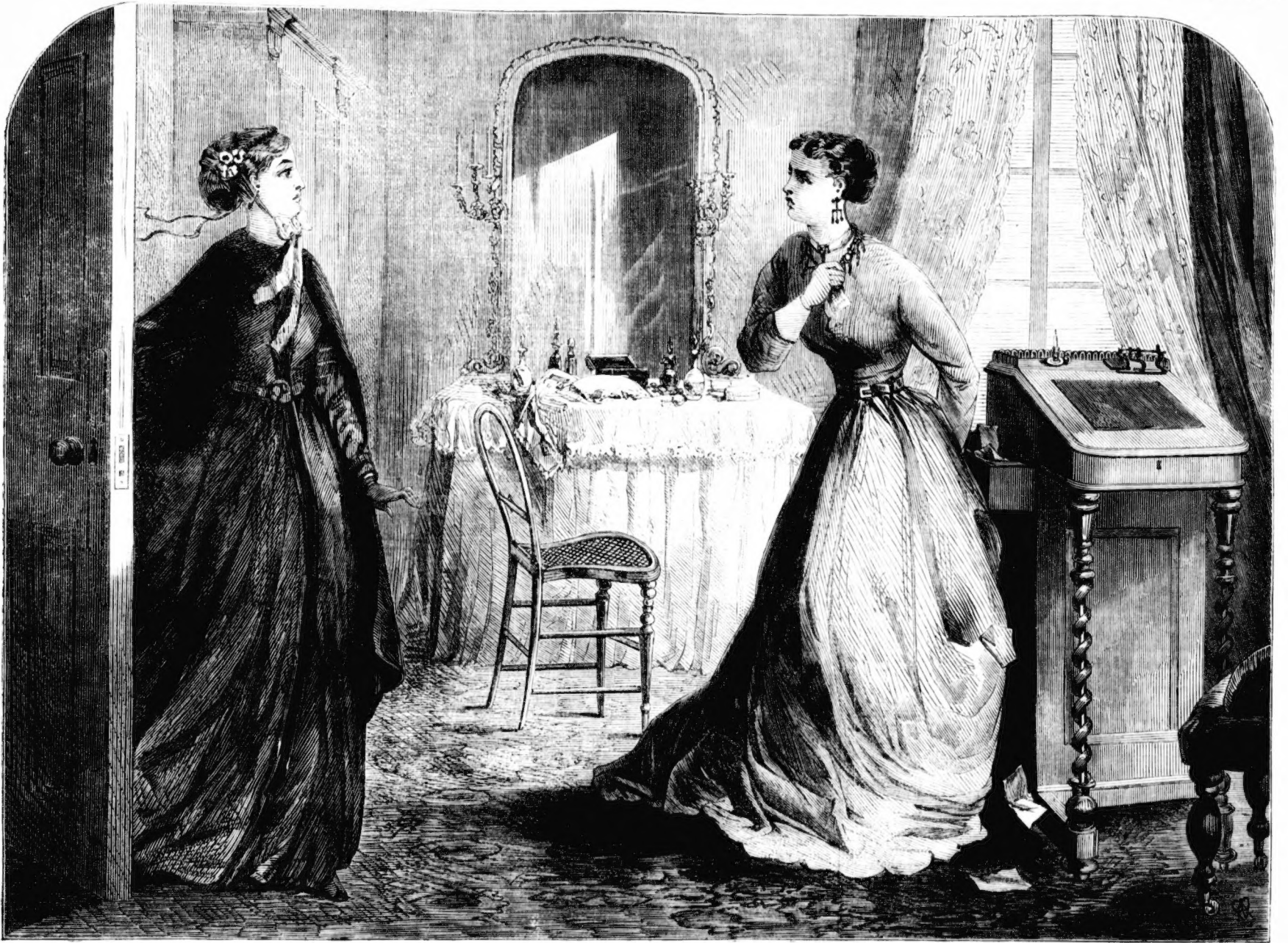
merchants, back front and skylights damaged by fire, and contents by water and removal; No. 4, G. Cowle, milliner, roof and back front severely damaged by fire, and contents by fire, water, and removal; No. 3, Messrs. Rivington and Co., publishers, back front damaged by fire, contents by water and removal; No. 2, Messrs. Ridgway and Co., army agents, back front and roof damaged by fire, and contents by fire, water, and removal; No. 5, J. Gurney, wine merchant, top floor nearly burnt out and roof off, lower part of house and contents severely damaged by water; No. 6, H. Graves and Co., print-sellers, back show-rooms 60 ft. by 40 ft., and contents burnt out and

roofs off, back front of house damaged by fire, and contents by fire, water, and removal; No. 7, London Assurance Company, back front and skylight damaged by fire, and contents slightly by water. Pall-mall: No. 8, G. Medcalf, jeweller, back front slightly scorched. Pall-mall, No. 5½ and No. 1, Colonnade, Messrs. Page and Sandeman, wine merchants, roofs and skylights damaged by fire, and contents by water and removal. Colonnade: No. 2, Messrs. Adkins and Robinson, bootmakers; No. 3, W. Steer, portmanteau-maker; No. 4, Messrs. Nugent, Power, and Co., wine merchants; No. 5, Messrs. Currie and Co., bootmakers; No. 6, H. G. Joy, fishing-tackle

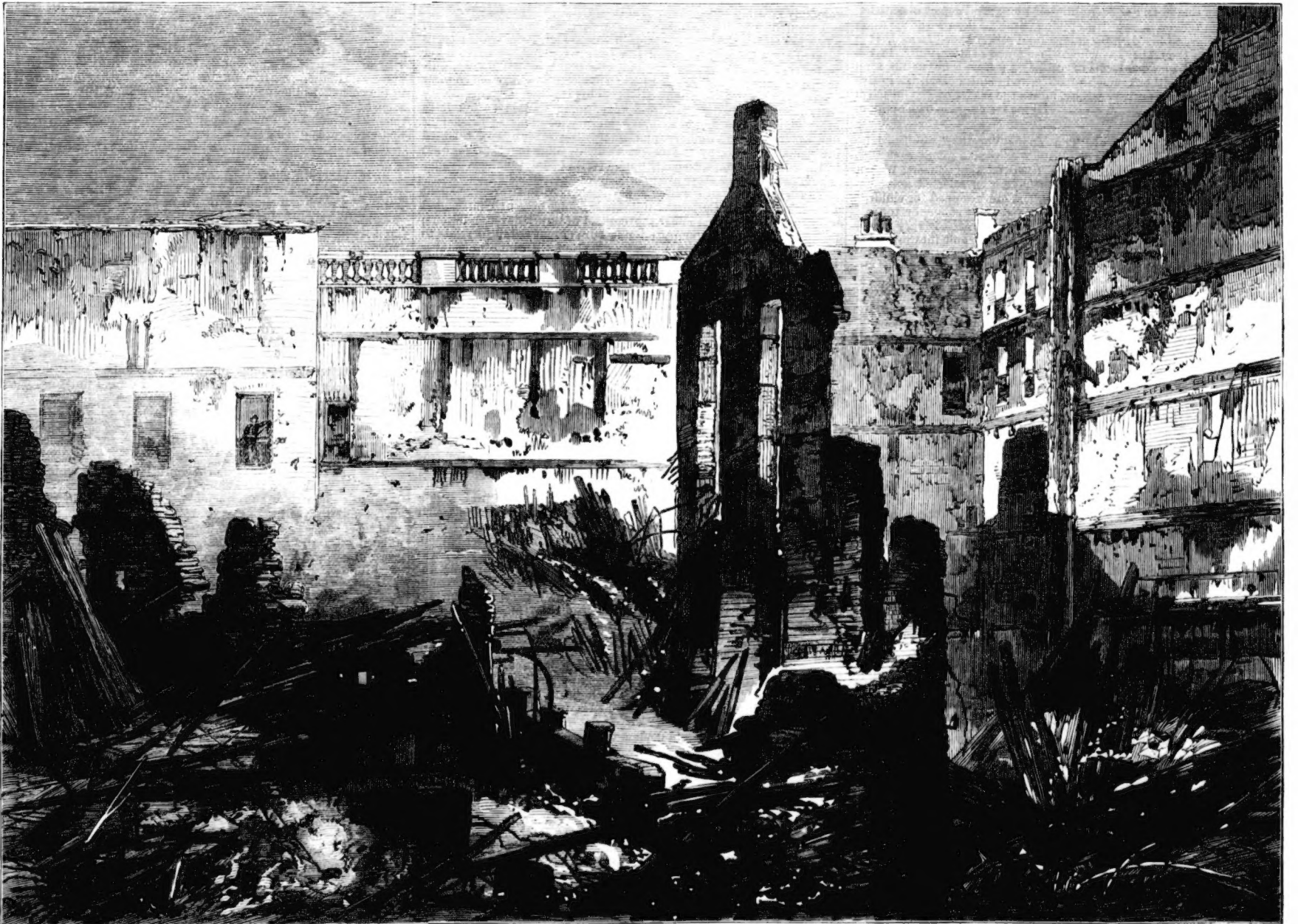
maker; No. 7, C. Brewer, wine and cigar merchant; No. 8, F. D. Palmera, bootmaker; No. 9, Mr. Ridout, tailor; No. 10, J. McDowall, bootmaker; No. 11, J. M. English, hosier; Nos. 12 and 13, M. Rouse, bootmaker; Nos. 14, 15, and 16, Messrs. Burgess and Co., perfumers; and No. 17, N. Ayling and Martin, cigar merchants, roofs and skylights damaged by fire, and contents by water and removal. Pall-mall: No. 2, E. Bale, private, back front and roof damaged by fire, and contents by water and removal; No. 3, E. Epitiaux, hotel-keeper, roof and back front damaged by fire, and contents very slightly by water."



DAMAGE DONE IN THE RESERVE GARDEN OF THE PARIS EXHIBITION DURING A STORM ON THE 1ST INST.



MR. JOSHUA THOMSON'S CHRISTMAS EVE: THE GOOD AND EVIL GENIUS.—(DRAWN BY MISS MATTHEWS.)—SEE SUPPLEMENT, PAGE 406.



RUINS OF HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

I AM sure the editor of the ILLUSTRATED TIMES agrees with me, and with sincere people in general, in disliking the "galvanised geniality" which at this season is such a marketable thing. But if a kind word or a lesson of forbearance is honestly waiting to be spoken, then Christmas time is an occasion of speech which may be frankly taken.

It so happens that I was born on Christmas Eve, and it would please me to think that a few lines of sympathy and kindly caution, dating from the "season," might catch the eye of a good many readers (especially readers who are also writers), and might prove of some little use. Here they are, then, under just two heads:—

First. Looking over the magazines—a task with which the present writer is painfully conversant—is always really pathetic work. I know in every month's issues how much hard work, half-required or unrequired, there must be. I know how badly some of it must be paid for, and how some of it is not paid for at all. I know how long some of it has waited in the editor's room before it got inserted. And I know how much of the hopes and aspirations of struggling men and women are represented by magazine work, though what might be said of some of it in this column is of very little consequence. I cannot think without many regrets how much of what deserves recognition must get passed over for want of space or from absolute fatigue on the part of the reviewer. The inevitable must happen, and will happen again; but I ask leave to say I am personally sorry for it, happen when it may. I would not add—unless I were certain of the truth of this, too—that nothing good is ever passed over from sheer want of vision or receptivity on the part of the critic. Whatever his wants, he is entitled to say that a quick and even nervously-varied sensibility to what is good, in every kind, is not one of those wants. The bearing of that is, that merit which is (for some reason) not spoken of is generally apprehended, and often very keenly, by the Literary Lounger.

Second. Harsh words are out of place at Christmas, but a lesson of charity is not. The function of charity in a critic, even if he happen to be a man of proved and tested many-sidedness of receptivity, is self-distrust in dealing with fresh products of the minds of others, whose first effect is puzzling. But as the incalculable majority of critical minds are not variously receptive, how necessary for them is the lesson of self-distrust, when words of wholesale valuation come to the pen's end! Criticism in detail is another matter. There is no need of much hesitation in saying that a book is full of bad grammar, or that there is an inconsistency in a plot, or that something in a poem is contrary to established usage. But wholesale valuation—which usually happens to be contemptuous, is another matter—the sort of valuation in the lump which, in Germany, for nine years made Richter out to be a writer of unintelligible trash, and, in England, Coleridge and Wordsworth mystical drivelers: the sort of valuation by wholesale which kept the serious poetry of Hood nearly out of sight until after his death. There is no room for specific illustration, even if that would not violate (as it might) the spirit of the season. But I may mention that I have just seen in a notice—evidently written by a clever and generally competent man—a small recent product of the imagination of one of the most ethereally beautiful of living writers (the author of "Phantastes") spoken of in terms which show that the reviewer was in the position of a cow handling a musket. And I have not the least doubt that, if the newspaper notices of it were all examined it would be found that a couple of hundred clever fellows have given it much the same kind of mention, a kind which proves that the highest merit of the little story—namely, deep spiritual significance, expressed in perfectly adjusted symbols—is thrown away upon them. Now, a man can no more acquire a fresh sensibility off-hand than he can grow a second pair of eyes or ears; but any man can make a serious practice of remembering that he probably has natural defects of appreciative power. Nay, a sensible man usually succeeds in finding out where these defects lie. And every kindly, not to say every honest, man ought to refrain from wholesale characterisation of what he suspects may lie out of his line. Nor does the present writer preach one thing and practise another. There are certain subjects on which he considers himself by natural defect disinterested to form and express decisive opinion, and he keeps silence upon those subjects, to his own pecuniary (and other) loss. Indeed, it is no more than the truth that wholesale characterisation, unless in the most safe and guarded terms of criticism (terms such as no man can command without much practice and painful care), is, in five cases out of ten, a positive wrong, unless the reader of the criticism is there and then supplied with material for forming his own opinion.

I have received a copy of "The Young Vocalist," published by Griffith and Farran, which is a collection of twelve songs, each with a pianoforte accompaniment, from the works of Mozart, Weber, Mendelssohn, Spohr, &c. The pieces have been selected and composed by Mrs. Mounsey Bartholomew, and are designed for children who are too young to sing operatic or romantic songs, or too old for those founded on nursery tales. The little book is very neatly got up, and I daresay will be found both useful and interesting to the young folk at this season, when singing will necessarily form a prominent feature of the amusements at children's parties.

Mr. Eugene Rimmel has this year, as usual, prepared a great variety of articles suitable for Christmas presents and New-Year's gifts, all of which, of course, are distinguished by the taste and elegance which are always features of Mr. Rimmel's productions.

Messrs. Parkins and Gotto, too, offer for selection presents of all sorts, which I may describe as being at once useful, elegant, and—what is of equal importance—very cheap.

THE THEATRICAL LOUNGER.

It would be sheer affectation on my part if I were to pretend that I have anything to write about this week, for I haven't. Mr. Burnand has a three-act comedy at the ROYALTY, but it was not produced in time to allow of my writing a notice of it for this Number; so it must stand over till next week.

The BOLBORN pantomime is simply a modern edition of the late Mr. Albert Smith's burlesque, "Valentine and Or-on," with the usual "comic scenes" of a pantomime tagged on to the end of it. The piece, as a burlesque, was very successful, some ten years since, at the Adelphi. Miss Bella Goodall is engaged to play Valentine.

Mr. Roberts, Mr. George Vining's acting manager, takes benefits at the PRINCESS'S on Monday and Tuesday next, on which occasions "Guy Mannering" will be played, with Mdlle. Liebhart, Miss Rose Hersee, Miss Rebecca Isaacs, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Paul, Mr. George Honey, and Mr. Widdicomb in the principal characters. Mr. Pratten, Herr Ganz, and Mr. Levy will also assist.

THE REFUGE FOR HOMELESS BOYS, GREAT QUEEN-STREET.—A real Christmas party might have been seen on Tuesday by anybody who was passing the Refuge for Homeless Boys in Great Queen-street—a party which we heartily wish may be repeated twice a week during the whole of the festive and inclement season. Above 300 poor little children, some of whom attend the ragged schools under the superintendence of Mr. W. Williams, were regaled at the refuge with a good hot dinner. It is intended, should funds be forthcoming, to continue this most useful method of dispensing charity weekly throughout the winter. Each dinner costs fivepence, and subscriptions are needed.

PRIDE OF ANCESTRY.—Sir Walter Scott was dining at a country house in Hampshire, where amongst the guests invited to meet him was the then Baronet of the Tyrril family. The conversation turned on the antiquity of families, and particularly that of Tyrril, which, it was said, was not only traceable to the Norman Conquest, but held a high position at that period; and the well-known story of William Rufus having been slain by an arrow from Sir Walter Tyrril's bow was cited as confirmation of the assertion. But, upon the prince of novelists having expressed grave doubts as to the authenticity of that fact, the worthy descendant of the knight was so nettled at any scepticism of the fond traditions of his house that he somewhat fiercely exclaimed, "Then next, I suppose, you will say that we did not smother the prince in the Tower!" My informant stated that Sir Walter merely bowed, and that the discussion was thus abruptly terminated.—Notes and Queries.

A STORY SPOILED IN THE TELLING.

BY THOMAS ARCHER.

FOR some years of my life I entertained a cherished purpose, the determination to fulfil which was of such regular periodical recurrence that it threatened to assume the character of a fixed and unalterable destiny.

I may mention that, while I lay claim to no extraordinary intellectual endowment, I have been given to understand, by perhaps too-partial friends, that my mental constitution is particularly well regulated; and, indeed, from the advantages of my early education, under the control of two esteemed aunts and a maternal grandmother, I am not disinclined to believe that I derived a considerable share of that orderly and proper demeanour which has ever distinguished our eminently respectable family.

I need hardly say that in the admirably-conducted household of the revered relations with whom I spent my youthful days no books were allowed which were not perfectly consistent with the most rigid propriety, and that none even of the serious novels which supplied the occasional evening's reading reached my hands till they had undergone a very strict supervision by the elder of my two aunts, who would, for my peculiar edification, adduce terrible instances—supposed to be in her own experience—of the effects of certain popular fictions, upon the youthful mind. Still, stimulated by the example of some of their friends, the sisters regularly subscribed for two or three periodicals of a harmless and social nature; and I even remember that an occasional number of a highly humorous publication called *Punch* appeared amongst us. Not much affecting the serious novels, which were, for the most part, dull, doctrinal, and, as I now think, exceedingly profane, the lighter periodical literature became a passion with me, and I'm afraid that I used frequently to expend my small allowance of pocket-money in the purchase of journals, which, had they been exposed to the searching investigation of Aunt Susanna, would at once have sealed the fate of one "who idled his time over lies and wicked, immoral sentiments." Of course, not having acquired any very profound discrimination, my surreptitious and therefore more highly-prized enjoyment was principally derived from those journals which displayed in the shop-windows pictures of unusual and startling interest; indeed, I can remember having four tremendous stories on my mind at a time, each of which was continued for a great many months in magazines published on the same day of the week.

I got to that pitch at last that I used actually to waylay the news-boys coming from the office, and, that I might read in safe seclusion, had accumulated quite a number of candle-ends in my bedroom cupboard; the worst of it was that they were *only ends* and would burn down into the socket at the exciting parts of the narrative—a propensity which necessitated the frequent holding up of the work with a pin till the consummation of a chapter. I have even gone so far as to light a lucifer that I might have a momentary glimpse of the fate of some atrocious character who was only disposed of over leaf.

Christmas time was a great occasion for my literary enthusiasm, for it not only brought me an accession of funds, but also provided new feasts of imagination in the shape of the inevitable "Christmas Numbers," which appeared as the enlarged and more expensive supplements of the weekly journals. I used to gorge myself with fiction at that period of the year as heartily as I did with mince-pie and elder-wine; I was between the two—the pies and the thrilling adventures—in a constant state of alternate daydream and nightmare, which bade fair to produce either apoplexy or spontaneous combustion; for my aunts had their particular Christmas numbers, too, which I was expected to read aloud with a due observation of stops—generally insisted on by audible counting on the part of Miss Susanna—before I retired to those literary stimulants, which awaited me in sundry uncut sheets, the discovery of which between the sacking of my bed and the mattress I had been dreading for hours. It must have been owing chiefly to the "Christmas Number" that I became, at last, the victim of a fixed idea—an insatiable craving—which, in after life, continually mocked me with a probability of its gratification, and yet remained amongst the events only remotely possible.

I wanted to be "snowed up"—to be detained, on a long journey, at an inn where the next coach didn't call for seven hours; to be belated at an hostelry where all the beds were full, and five other travellers beside myself had to pass the night in the "snug, curtained parlour;" to make one of a select circle at a very old country house, where nobody thought about going to bed, and everybody had something good to tell, and very much wanted to tell it to everybody else; in short, to make an unexceptionable listener at one of those extraordinary and interesting meetings of talented individuals who all, by the merest accident, come together, for once in their lives, perhaps, to contribute a series of tales and adventures which somebody or other afterwards goes and publishes.

The endeavour to discover some such occasion for hearing at first hand a "new Christmas number" could not, of course, find scope while I remained under the control of my beloved relations; and, if I except my attempt to incite our servant Sarah to relate to me some narrative within her own experience, I cannot remember having definitely entertained the idea. I need scarcely remark, perhaps, that I elicited nothing from Sarah beyond a feeble recital of the supposed objections of her aunt, who kept a muffin-shop at Pimlico, to her "keeping company" with a young man.

The day came at length, however, when, gravely regarding me, my amiable protectresses spoke of the necessity for my having some definite occupation; and, after many conferences, in which I am bound to acknowledge, my own particular opinions and inclinations were but little regarded, the direction of my future business career was intrusted to Mr. Stalkey, of the firm of Stalkey, Burrow, and Budd, general factors, of Cowheel-lane, in the parish of St. Grimely-wapshot, in the city of London.

It would be unnecessary to state that Mr. Stalkey was a "serious" man—that very qualification was the reason of the distinction which he conferred upon me in giving me a personal introduction to the house; for, as he said, though he seldom introduced new members into the staff of the establishment, the high respect in which he had long held my aunts caused him to regard me as a youth not likely to exhibit that disregard for high principle which unfortunately, &c., &c., in a solemn and admonitory speech.

Certainly, the department of the business in Cowheel-lane in which I was engaged (at the rate of nothing for the first year) was a very serious affair indeed: there was very little opportunity for any great display of improper levity, inasmuch as we were unceasingly at work from morning till night, and the principals retained a very practical faith in the judicious metrical warning which indicates the fearful geographical position of the idle boys or girls to whom a well-known "infant poem" addresses itself.

I only know that, from the first day when I went to the dark, dusty old offices, crowded with bales and packages, and soiled a clean, white collar in the process of sorting and labelling a heap of dusty letters which had evidently been years in accumulating for my especial benefit; to the time when I took the post of general accountant, I knew very little leisure.

What spare time I could command was frequently devoted to my old friends the periodicals, however, and for four years I felt as Christmas came round that the period might at last arrive when, having occasionally to travel for the house, I should command the opportunity for which I had waited so patiently.

That period came at last when among my duties was included the receipt of the quarterly payments of certain country customers, and I should fail were I to attempt to tell the thrill, the exquisite and bounding satisfaction, with which I took my first long journey. It was in the Christmas week, too, and who knew what might happen? I scrutinised the face of every passenger who sat in my compartment of the railway carriage, as thinking that they might break out incontinently into narrative.

Nothing of the sort happened.

One old gentleman fell fast asleep, and, continually waking up in the belief that he had passed his station, persisted in thrusting his

head out of the window, while he stood alternately on each of my feet. Next to me sat a lady who, indignantly resenting the stout gentleman's conduct in obscuring the light by which she was reading a large volume of the *Family Herald*, asked me, to my discomfort, whether I understood what some people could be about to make themselves so disagreeable to other people. The rest of the passengers consisted of a farm-labourer, who would lie down on the seat, with my carpet-bag for a pillow; a woman who was continually giving refreshment to a poor little infant suffering under some cutaneous eruption; and a florid-looking man, who every now and then stretched himself frantically, yawned in terrific gasps, looking steadily at me all the time, and finally consoled himself by whistling.

I need not prolong the descriptions of that greatly-disappointing journey. Let it suffice that I really was *snowed up*, on the very borders of Wales; had to spend Christmas Day at a large, lonely hotel, with nothing to amuse me but the *Times*; that year's almanack, which hung in a black frame over the fire; an old road-book, half destroyed, and minus the maps of every adjacent county; and an advertising pamphlet of a notorious clothing firm.

The waiter who brought up my dinner evidently pitied me, for he came into the room about every half hour, looked wistfully at me, stirred the fire, wiped an imaginary crumb off the table, and finally retired to the basement of the establishment, whence I heard sounds of meriment come up the stairs in the most provoking way possible.

I had dispatched my lonely dinner hastily; not even the plum-pudding consoled me; and when the smoky bell inside the old black clock on the landing coughed out eleven I found myself being led chaotically to my bed-room, where even sleep failed to dissipate the effects of five pints of sherry, which the serial appearances of the waiter had induced me to order "for the good of the house" and to my own unspeakable, or rather speechless confusion.

I was still sanguine that the wish of my heart might be fulfilled, and on each succeeding journey had fully prepared myself for whatever might occur in the various hosteries at which I was to stop. I must acknowledge, however, that I at last grew into a belief that I was suspected to be one of the nefarious shorthand writers, who, as I said before, go and publish these extraordinary stories after being allowed the privilege of listening. To meet this difficulty I frequently wrote my name on the luggage-labels used by "the firm" for packages, so that under my own humble appellation, as it appeared on my portmanteau, "Stalkey, Burrow, and Budd," was displayed in large fat capitals. Nothing seemed to be of any use, however; and whether I strolled about country towns visiting the various tap-rooms, where country legends might be awaiting me, or frequented the commercial-rooms of more pretentious taverns, my feelings were continually injured as much by the utter want of intellectual amusement, which was everywhere exhibited, as by the consciousness that I was falling a victim to the effects of the repeated and various drinks, the purchase of which became necessary to secure my entrance to either parlour or tap-room company.

I never could contrive to get snowed up either after that first time, and, as everyone knows how remarkably fine, or how particularly "muggy" the Christmas days have lately become in this country, I lost a great deal of enjoyment by leaving London on the day before Christmas Eve for some dull place where nobody went who could possibly help it, and where, so far from all the "well-aired beds," being engaged, I had full liberty to secure a fresh one every night and sleep in it till the empty coach came round punctually in the morning, or, which sometimes happened, didn't trouble itself to call for only one passenger.

Leaving out, of course, all the incomprehensible allusions which the peasantry grunt out to each other over their beer; and the equally unsatisfactory, polite, and ornamental conversation of the gentlemen of the commercial rooms; I can, at the present moment, only remember two occasions on which I even approached the probability of becoming an interested listener to an original story; on both these occasions I was fated to lose the actual narrative.

This first happened at a dingy beershop called the "Fox and Hound," in a little village in Suffolk, where I had endeavoured to conciliate the habits of the taproom by warming my pint of ale in the long funnel-shaped implement used at the fire for that purpose, and mingling therewith a quart of gin—a mixture of which I implore the prudent reader to beware.

A man in the costume of the locality, consisting, as far as was visible, of a pair of enormously thick boots, a dirty smock frock, and a felt hat shaped like an inverted basin, was smoking his pipe in the corner, while another was superintending the concoction of some of the universal beverage just alluded to, when the following remarks, which I will place in the form of a dialogue, first excited and afterwards discouraged me:—

First Man. You didn't happ'n to be down heer last noight, did 'ee?

Second Man. What toime as that?

First. When th' chap brote that little grey mare roond to th' door.

Second. Ay; oi shud think oi war; an' a good little mare she is tew; an' a room old chap's t' owner of her.

First. What, old Rowney? You can tell me more n'r I know 'bout t' old booy.

Second. Praps not, but oi know a quare story 'bout him, tew, an about the toime as he run that mare foorty moile; ay, that a did, (with an appealing look to the room).

First. Foorty moile! You knows a lot 'bout ut, and a soight about hares, I shoold'n wonder.

Second. Do'ent yow say no moor 'bout that there, Sam; you know'd 'nuf to throw down Farmer Ball's filly an' break ut's knees; ay?

First. 'Tis loi, an I know who's as good man's yow any day with t' hares or what yow loike and wheer yow loike.

Second. You're loi tew, an' if yow say I dunno nothen 'bout that there mare you're 'tother loi.

Third (rising and tearing off his frock). Wull, yow stan' oop and say that theer like a man.

First (tearing off his jacket). Yes, I wull, for two such as your loike.

This was the signal for general confusion, amidst which I slipped out, and the landlord interfered.

It was some time subsequent to this that, after a very fatiguing day, I found myself in the coffee-room of a railway hotel, where half a dozen representatives of commercial houses were sitting round a table by the fire. I was glad, after disposing of my chop and glass of port wine, to draw near the cheerful circle, and, from the socially-disposed manner in which they were conversing, began to anticipate that I had at last discovered my long-sought occasion.

The men were of all ages, from a very youthful person in a dark brown cutaway coat and a sporting pin to a very respectable-looking individual in a white neckcloth, who sat at the end of the table.

The post of chairman was occupied by a venerable gentleman with silvery hair, and that florid colour and moist gleaming eye which are generally supposed to denote an experienced narrator and a jovial companion.

I was just in time! Oh! how my heart beat, as I heard one of the men who was smoking a short black pipe say, indicating the chairman, "Gentlemen, I propose that our esteemed friend Pilkins tells the story of old Grampus; there may be some here that 'ave 'eard it before, but as I know some of us 'aven't, perhaps."

The gentleman in the white neckcloth rose by the aid of the table, and, gracefully waving one hand towards me, while he held on by the other (perhaps he was suffering from rheumatism) observed, with a peculiar impediment—

"Gentl'm'n, I crave—er—pardon; if I'm not mistake—n (and I hope any gentl'm'n here 'll c'rect me if I am mistaken), ere's a gentl'm'n come 'mongst us—a—night who's stranger to th' comp'ny; while I'm sure we're all of us glar—er—see—'im. I would, with 'at gentl'm'n's permission, propose 'at, before m' worthy fren'—if allow—me call—'im so, Pilkins, tell 's story, or—sing—ong, or what not (an noborry berrer, I'm sure). I'll propose to, 'at gentl'm'n, to order glasses round." This proposition was received with polite but subdued applause (applause in the manner of a delicate insinuation), and, too happy to number myself among the jovial band, I gave the

necessary instructions to the waiter, who happened somehow to be in the room at the moment.

Almost everybody was smoking by this time, and, as a long pipe was laid near me on the table, I could do no less than follow so laudable an example, so that there followed a quiet interval, during which the contents of each glass was sensibly diminished.

It was at this juncture that my nearest neighbour, who wore, I think, the most magnificent whiskers that I ever beheld, gave a premonitory tap on the table, and remarked, "Gentlemen, all! As I've a proposition to make that won't take half a minute, I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing it responded to by all the present company. And this is what I'm going to say—It ain't quite fair that the gentlemen that are willing to amuse should have all the work to do, and so I ask the gentlemen that don't tell a story or sing a song or something (and I'm one of 'em) to stand glasses round in turn, that they may contribute to the harmony of the evening."

"Hear, hear!—thash jolly good feller!" from the gentleman in the white neckcloth.

The various fluids were again furnished by the attentive waiter, and the chairman rose. My heart was in my mouth to hear the speech which should prelude a series of tales never to be forgotten. I thought it remarkable that his accents, too, were blended with a slight sibilation, which would doubtless give a humorous zest to his recital, since his manner was very deliberate.

"Gentlemen," he began, "feeling—ash—we all—do—on present—'casion. I may, I hope, be 'lowed to offer a few remarks, on the very high—an—the very ill—deserved compl'm't (No, no!)—I repeat, on—a—very ill'deserved compl'm't you've paid—me—iss—night. Gent'l'm'n, when the immortal wheel—a—time revolves in its—course—an—brings us roun'—again to those seasons which, I hope—I—may—say, as social, as brotherly, as affecshullat—beings we all—are proud an' happy to meet—agerr—when, though the bloom may a left our cheeks—('Oh, cheek!' from the youth in the sporting coat). When, gent'l'm'n, I make a few observat'n, I am 'fraid my fren', who may not know to whom he 'dresses his ill-timed interrupt'n, is not zackly 'ware that the rules of a com-mersh'l room are"—

"Fine—a—glashez—round," interposed the white neckcloth, struggling on to his legs.

"I shubmit a—my—steem—frend Walker," continued the chairman, sinking into his seat, "an 'ave to observe 'at a waiter's in the room."

For the third time the story was interrupted, but when the fresh potatoes were introduced, Mr. Perkins drew his chair nearer the fire and began. He had got as far as "I'm 'fraid most ev-er gent'l'm'n here 'ave heard the little an—an'c—dote—wish I'll agoin a tell—" When—

At the point of the chairman's story which I have just mentioned, and when my eyes were fixed on him that I might not miss a word, a most extraordinary phenomenon occurred, which I still think may have been attributable to some poisonous substance acting on my frame. I became sensible of a sudden motion in the room, and, endeavouring to clear my eyes from a mist which came before them, saw that he seemed to occupy a position at the other end of the table to that from which I had last heard him speak. He was still speaking, but the mist had filled my ears, and I was conscious only of a humming sound, alternating with suppressed laughter. Then the whole company seemed to surround me closely, and in my attempt to catch at one of them they all receded to what seemed a tremendous distance. This was followed by a strong burst of light and the falling of a heavy body somewhere near me. I was taken suddenly ill, and under circumstances which might—perhaps did—incure the suspicion of intoxication.

How a teakettle came into my head I don't know, but I found myself presenting one to the waiter, who led me to my bed-room door. I became insensible, and did not regain consciousness till early morning, when I felt that I was lying outside the bed covered with a railway rug.

I awoke a wiser, if not a better man; but I have not yet given up the search for a real record of Christmas stories; though I never went to that inn again when I afterwards visited Bronzton. I am so convinced that their liquors were shamefully and even poisonously adulterated that I make a point of staying at the Temperance Hotel, where even the tea and coffee cannot be libelled as strong drinks. That I was at all intoxicated of course I can most unhesitatingly deny. What had I had, I should like to know? It's true I was fatigued at the time; and a very sober Irishman of my acquaintance who can't even bear the smell of spirits has told me of his having been what he called "overtaken with drink;" but in my case—no, it couldn't be.

THE ABYSSINIAN EXPEDITION.—The following telegram, forwarded from Suez on Tuesday, has been received from our special correspondent with the Abyssinian expedition:—"The advance brigade reached Sadele, in Abyssinia, on Dec. 6; all well. The natives are friendly in their behaviour, and offer supplies. Water is abundant. The climate is good; the variations of temperature ranging between a maximum of 73 deg. and a minimum of 33 deg. According to accounts from the interior, King Theodore has destroyed Debra Tabor by fire. He is encamped in the neighbourhood, and intends marching to Magdala. The insurgents will resist his advance. The natives kill his stragglers."

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.—The Council of the Society of Arts have convened a conference for Thursday and Friday, Jan. 23 and 24 next, to consider and suggest what measures may be taken to promote the industrial and scientific education of the various classes of the community. The object of the conference is to ascertain, not merely what the Society of Arts, Manufacturers, and Commerce, but what the nation at large, can do to promote technical education among the workmen, the foremen, the overlookers, and the employers in arts, manufactures, and commerce; and it is hoped that an expression of opinion by the conference may tend in some degree to diminish the difficulties with which the solution of this question of national education is at present confessedly surrounded. Invitations to the conference are being sent to the Mayors of the towns which are the principal seats of manufacture in the United Kingdom, the presidents of the chambers of commerce and agriculture, the presidents of all societies and public companies which have co-operated with the Society in respect of education or art-workmanship, the presidents of institutions in which the Society of Arts, her Majesty's inspectors of schools, factories, mines, and collieries, the English jurors at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, the society's judges in art-workmanship, and the society's examiners in education.

JAPANESE PORTS.—In a report to the Foreign Office, Mr. Sidney Looock, Secretary of Embassy in Japan, gives the result of inquiries which he had an opportunity of making as to the condition and trade of Osaka and Higo, on the recent visit of the foreign representatives to those ports, about to be opened to foreign commerce. In Osaka, a large town with more than 300,000 people, where hitherto foreigners have never been seen, the visitors found they might go into every quarter without seeing an angry look or hearing an offensive word. The people are more industrious as well as more orderly than in Jeddo. There is a *furor* for everything foreign, from a pair of topboots to a Geneva watch. Bales of Manchester goods are to be seen in the doorways of wholesale houses, and there are smaller shops devoted almost exclusively to the retail of miscellaneous foreign goods. Mr. Looock learnt that there were no fewer than forty native photographers in the city, obtaining their lenses, plates, and chemicals from abroad, and all finding full occupation. Osaka is a great *entrepôt* whither produce and goods come from the surrounding country for sale, and merchandise is brought by sea. The chief centre for silk-weaving appears to be Kioto, about thirty miles from Osaka. Little silk is woven in Osaka itself, but the shops in which silks of every description are sold are on a scale which testifies to the quantity of business that must be carried on within. In the largest there are as many as 300 persons employed. The older hands may be seen squatting on the floor, unfolding goods before the customers, while the younger assistants run noiselessly about, bringing and removing the articles. Up stairs are private rooms, to which the more distinguished or more extravagant customers are taken and attended to by experienced hands, while tea, cakes, and sweetmeats are served. But a man can live in a little shop of ten mats and carry on a thriving trade, as was remarked to Mr. Looock by a native who dealt in foreign goods and sells trumpery saddles at £15 apiece. The well-known Uji tea is grown in a district about twenty-five miles distant. Osaka will prove a focus for the distribution of our merchandise in the interior, where it is at present almost unknown. Unfortunately, Osaka is two or three miles above the mouth of the wide but shallow river on which it is situated, and the roadstead is exposed. But the neighbouring port of Higo is also to be opened, where ships may find shelter, and vessels of 1000 tons can anchor within a few yards of the shore. The foreign settlement here, near the eastern extremity of the bay of Kobe, will be distant from the foreign settlement at Osaka not much over twenty miles, which is the distance of Yokohama from Jeddo. Coal has been discovered in the hills about four miles from Higo.

FATAL EXPLOSION AT NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

A FEARFUL explosion of nitro-glycerine occurred at Newcastle-on-Tyne on Tuesday. It seems that Inspector Amos and Sub-Inspector Wallace, of the Newcastle police had received information that a quantity of nitro-glycerine was stored in a cellar in the White Swan-yard, in the Cloth Market, immediately behind the Branch Bank of England, and that it belonged to an auctioneer named Spark. They examined the place, and found that it was contained in nine square canisters, in baskets packed in straw, and immediately sought the owner of it, to have it removed to a place of safety. They found him at his place of business, and represented the matter to him. He said that he would have it sent back to the person who consigned it to him, and in company of the officers he tried whether the railway company would carry it, but they refused. An application was then made to Mr. Nesham, who has a gunpowder store, to have it put into a magazine, but he refused to take it. The case was then represented to the magistrates, who, upon consultation, gave instructions to have it destroyed. The Sheriff of Newcastle, Mr. John Mawson, is a well-known practical chemist, and the police applied to him as to the best method of dealing with this deadly liquid. He, after consulting with other chemists, advised that it should be buried in some of the crevices or crevices of some old pit workings in the neighbourhood. But, while these transactions had been going on, from some unexplained reason the nitro-glycerine had been removed from the White Swan-yard to Spark's office, in the Townhall, immediately over the council chamber. This being discovered, a policeman was immediately sent to watch it, and between two and three in the afternoon a cart was brought and the canisters were placed in it and taken to the Town Moor. The Sheriff and Mr. Bryson, the town surveyor, with Sub-Inspector Wallace, and a policeman named Donald Bain, accompanied the cart to the Town Moor. They found a crevice or creek near the Cholera Hospital, into which the liquid from the nine canisters was poured; but, after this was completed, it was found that a quantity of crystallised matter was sticking to the bottoms of three of the canisters. The Sheriff instructed Wallace to put some earth over the liquid that had been poured into the crevice, and ordered the other men to bury the three crystallised canisters in the earth some distance off. While Wallace was shovelling the earth into the crevice, he was startled by a frightful explosion in the direction where the men had gone, and, running to the scene, he found a sad catastrophe had occurred. The three canisters had exploded. Donald Bain, the policeman, was nearly blown to pieces, and was dead. Shotton and Appleby, two carmen, were also killed. Mr. Bryson was dreadfully mangled about the face, and was apparently dying, and the Sheriff was shockingly hurt. A boy, named Samuel Wadley, was lying in a hole dreadfully injured. Mawson, Bryson, and Wadley were taken with all dispatch to the infirmary, and the bodies of the other three were removed to the Cholera Hospital. Bryson has received a compound fracture of the thigh and other injuries, and is not likely to recover; the Sheriff very much hurt about the face, and is likely to lose his eyes; but his case is hopeful. Wadley is very ill. The magistrates have been sitting at the police court, making an investigation. There was great alarm in the town, as the public mind could not be disabused of the idea that the explosion had to do with Fenianism.

FATAL GAROTTE OUTRAGE.—A garotte outrage, resulting in the death of the victim, has occurred in Mile-end. The person whose life has been sacrificed was Mr. Thomas Obrun, who for twenty-seven years was chief co-oper at St. Katharine Docks. The facts were disclosed at the inquest held, on Monday evening, by Mr. Richards, deputy coroner, at the Fountain Tavern, Stacey-street, Mile-end. The widow of the deceased was represented by Mr. Charles Young, solicitor; Mr. Mumford, superintendent of the dock police, watched the case for the St. Katharine Docks Company; and Inspector Brady represented the Commissioners of Police. Mrs. Mary Ann Obrun, 183, Oxford-street, Mile-end, said that the deceased was her husband. On the morning of Tuesday, the 3rd inst., he left home in perfect health to attend to his business at the docks. He was forty-eight years of age. He returned at twenty-five minutes past five. His face was cut and bleeding, and so were his hands. He said that as he was passing by the railway arch in Lucas-street, Mile-end, at about a quarter to five o'clock, two men rushed from underneath the arch and knocked him down. They attacked him from behind, so that he could not defend himself. While he was on the ground one of the men turned him over on the back and then knelt on his chest, and seized hold of his throat. They undid the fastenings of his clothes and took 1s. 9d. out of his right-hand trousers pocket. He at that moment became insensible from the pressure on his throat. Witness did not know whether he had lost anything more, but he had received £9 the day previous. When he recovered consciousness he found that the men had gone away. He got up, and with great difficulty walked home. Near his own door he fell on the pavement, and when he arrived at the house he was in such a condition that witness had to assist him into the parlour. He was quite sober. He wished to go to the police-station to give information of the outrage, but witness dissuaded him, because he was too much injured to stand the excitement. A woman whom witness did not know called the next morning and asked how Mr. Obrun was. The deceased was attended by Dr. Mahoney. He died on Wednesday last from the injuries which he had received on the evening of the 3rd inst. After some unimportant evidence, the coroner said that he would adjourn the case to enable the police to make further inquiries, and to see if the woman who so strangely called to ask after the condition of the deceased could not be traced. A post-mortem examination of the body of the unfortunate deceased has been made by Dr. L. Mahoney, and it has been thereby ascertained that the deceased's ribs had been broken and forced into the lungs.

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phases of Venus, &c. This extraordinary cheap and powerful glass is of the best
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The FLORENCE—Look-itch.
If any purchaser be dissatisfied with it, we will give in exchange any Sewing-machine
of similar price known to the trade.—F. S. M. and Co., 97, Chesapeake.

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Hospital, Dispensary, and private practice all furnish innumerable cases in which
Dr. De Jongh's oil, containing peculiar curative principles which no other possesses, has
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No remedy so rapidly improves the nutritive functions or produces a more marked and
favourable influence on the local malady.

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From Dr. PERRIER, F.R.S.—"I know that no one can be better, and few so well,
acquainted with the physical and chemical properties of this medicine as yourself, whom
I regard as the highest authority on the subject." From Dr. GRANVILLE, F.R.S.—
"It is preferable in many respects to oils sold without the guarantee of such an authority
as Dr. De Jongh."

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unable to use the so-called 'refined,' or white Cod-liver Oil, from its sticky and
undecanted taste." From Dr. EDGAR SHEPPARD—"It has the rare excellence of
being well borne and assimilated by stomachs which reject the ordinary oils."

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COD-LIVER OIL.**—Firmly resist attempts often made by unscrupulous dealers,
when Dr. De Jongh's Oil is applied for, to recommend, solely with a view to an extra
profit, other kinds of cod-liver oil, under the fallacious promise that they are equally
pure and efficacious.—Capacities Imperial half-pint, 2s. 6d.; pints, 4s. 9d.; quarts, 9s.
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your houses, for it is the only safe antidote in Fevers, Eruptive Affections, Sea
or Bilious Sickness, and Headache.—Sold by all Chemists, and the only Maker, H.
Lamplough, Chemist, 113, Holborn-vic, London.

INFLUENZA AND RHEUMATISM.—The most valuable
remedy for these complaints is BARCLAY'S (Batemans') PECTORAL DROPS,
which speedily cures Influenza, Colds, and Rheumatism. Numerous testimonials to its
value can be had of Barclay and Sons, 15, Farringdon-street. Sold in 1s. 1d. and 2s. 9d.
bottles, and by all Chemists; but ask for Barclay's, and observe name and address.

CHEST COMPLAINTS.—Instant relief by
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WOODHOUSE'S BALSA OF SPERMACELE.
Prepared only by BARCLAY and SONS, 95, Farringdon-street, London; and sold in
bottles, at 1s. 1d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 6d. each.
May be obtained of any Chemist.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP, for Children
Cutting Teeth, has gained a greater reputation in America during the last
fifteen years than any remedy of the kind ever known. It is pleasant to take, and
safe in all cases; it soothes the child and gives it rest; it relieves griping in the bowels
or wind in the stomach, and cures dysentery or diarrhoea, whether arising from
teething or other causes; it softens the gums, and allays all irritation. No mother
child, or without it. Full directions on each bottle. Price 1s. 1d. Sold by all
Chemists in the kingdom.—London Depot, 305, High Holborn.

**"I HAVE been not only relieved, but Cured, of a Chronic
Winter Cough by
DR. LOOCK'S WAFERS."**
The above is from Mr. J. Smedley, Book-eller, Sleaford.
Dr. Loock's Wafers are sold by all Medicine Vendors, at 1s. 1d. per box.

HOLLOWAY'S OINTMENT AND PILLS are curative
agents of no mean pretensions; they have wrought cures of ulcers, bad legs,
dropical swellings, scrofulous sores, enlarged glands, and cancerous growths after pro-
fessional skill had failed. The ease accompanying the progress towards health is
remarkable.

BEAUTIFUL TEETH.—Nothing so much adds to the
appearance of a lady or gentleman as white and sound Teeth. And we think no
preparation yet discovered equals VAN BUSKIRK'S FRAGRANT SOZODONT for
cleansing and Preserving the Teeth, hardening the Gums, removing all tartar and
scum, arresting the progress of decay, and whitening such parts as have already become
black. It not only gives the teeth a purely whiteness, but it removes also all bad odours
arising from decayed teeth or a foul stomach. Five or six drops of the Sozodont on a
wet toothbrush causes a sort of froth to form in the mouth while rubbing the teeth,
which penetrates every crevice; after which the mouth should be rinsed with water.
The Sozodont is very neatly put up in 1s. bottles, and is certainly the most beautiful as well
as the most useful toilet preparation in the world. Sold by Chemists and Perfumers, at
3s. per bottle. London Depot, 205, High Holborn.

**THROAT DISEASES.—BROWN'S BRONCHIAL
TROCHES,** which have proved so successful in America, for the cure of Coughs,
Colds, Hoarseness, Bronchitis, Asthma, Catarrh, or any irritation or soreness of the
throat, are now imported and sold in this country at 1s. 1d. per Box. Put up in the
form of a Lozenge, it is the most certain, pleasant, safe, and sure remedy for clearing
and strengthening the voice known in the world. Children will find them beneficial
in cases of Whooping Cough. No family should be without them. Some of the most
eminent singers of the Royal Italian Opera, London, pronounce them the best article
for Hoarseness ever offered to the public. The Rev. Henry Warr Beecher says, "I
have often recommended them to friends who were public speakers, and in many cases
they have proved extremely serviceable." The Lozenge has the words "Brown's
Bronchial Troches" on the Government stamp around each box. Principal Office, 305,
High Holborn, London. Sold by all Chemists.

A REAL BLESSING TO MOTHERS.
The Teething of Infants forms one of the chief anxieties of mothers; but
Mrs. JOHNSON'S AMERICAN SOOTHING SYRUP,
free from any medicine, affords immediate relief to the gums, prevents Convulsions,
and during forty years has a world-wide reputation. Mothers should see Mrs.
Johnson's name on each bottle; also that of Barclay and Sons, 95, Farringdon-street.
Sold by all Chemists, with full instructions, at 2s. 9d. a bottle.

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MORISON'S VEGETABLE UNIVERSAL MEDICINE.
SYNOPSIS OF THE ELEMENTS OF MORISON'S SYSTEM OF MEDICINE
1. The vital principle is in the blood.
2. Everything in the body is derived from the blood.
3. All constitutions are radically the same.
4. All diseases arise from impurity of the blood.
5. Pain and disease have the same origin.
6. From the intimate connection subsisting between mind and body, the health of the
one must conduce to the serenity of the other.
7. Proper vegetable purgation is the only medicinal mode for effectually eradicating
disease.
8. The discovery of a vegetable medicine was a desideratum.
9. This discovery was made by James Morison, Esq. of Hylkelt, who by force of this
system procured the "medical liberty of the East."—
Morison's Vegetable Universal Medicine are sold by the Hygieian Agents and all
Medicine Vendors.



BLIND MAN'S BLUFF: CAUGHT! CAUGHT!"—(DRAWN BY D. H. FRISTON.)—SEE SUPPLEMENT, PAGE 407.



HOME FOR CHRISTMAS: THE WELCOME AT THE LODGE.—(DRAWN BY B. POTTS.)



SNATCHING A KISS UNDER THE MISLETOE.—(DRAWN BY D. H. PRISTON)

COMING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS.

CHRISTMAS-TIDE is, above all other seasons, distinguished for its being the period when those who have been absent all the year come home to join once more the family circle—sometimes diminished, sometimes enlarged, but still containing those blessed influences the centre of which is symbolised by the word "home." At Christmas, when our thoughts are somehow drawn to the house not built with hands, eternal in the heavens, it is surely fitting that the earthly home—the family, the fatherhood, sonship, brotherhood, the love and self-sacrifice and unity by which we see in each other God's image—should be most prominent in the midst of all our holiday festivities. Let prodigal as well as heir come home on that blessed day, and both find a Father coming out to meet them with a ring and shoes and a robe for him who needs them most, and a fatted calf and wine and music for all the guests. Let sorrow that has endured for twelve months of night give place to the joy that should herald in that wondrous morn of the Nativity. Let mirth, and the jollity that comes of youth, and health, and keen sense of pleasure, enable us to rejoice, giving thanks; and, with a jovial holiness, a grateful and genial piety, make the best of both worlds by using the good things of this one without pretending that they are snares and temptations, and, at the same time, without perverting them into either. We ourselves are heirs of a great estate. Even the poorest and humblest of us have come into some kind of inheritance, have some talents intrusted to us, and may look forward to entering upon a fuller heirship hereafter, when we go home, "to go no more out for ever."

THE MISTLETOE HARVEST.

WHENCE comes the supply of the mystic plant whose shining leaves and white berries inaugurate the present holiday season? The good old practice of decking walls and windows with green boughs is still maintained, and it must often have been matter for wonder to the loungers in the London markets how the supply was kept up; for mistletoe, like friendship, is a comparatively scarce and slowly-growing plant; and the oaks once stripped of their naturally ingrafted parasites there would, one might think, be an end for ever of the Druidical boughs, except in some horticultural show where a few specimens could be preserved. The fact is, however, that mistletoe is a commodity too profitable to be neglected; and though for a year or two there were fears that the supply, like that of oysters, would fail almost past reparation, the growth of the plant was maintained successfully. In those deep-wooded Worcestershire lanes around Malvern, and amidst the glorious apple-orchards about the Severn valley, the mistletoe harvest is gathering as we write; the harvest which grows upon the aspen-poplars and the apple-trees, and for which the waggons wait in the crisp, hard, frosty roads. There must surely be some sentimental reflections in the minds of the men who go to reap the mistletoe with saw and cleaver. Perhaps some few sprays may be retained for home use. Let us hope, at all events, that the good old observances of the Druid's bough may not pass away even in London, for then would the harvest be neglected and kissing would go altogether out of fashion. This white-berried plant is seldom found now upon oak-trees; indeed, the mistle-oak is growing very rare, except as a botanical curiosity. Only one or two oaks are to be found in the locality whence the mistletoe harvest comes. One of them is in Lord Dudley's park. The dealers in mistletoe go and take stock of the crop growing in the various orchards on the apple and aspen-poplar trees, and make a bid for the lot, which they afterwards clear off—doubtless to the satisfaction of the farmers, who can scarcely be devious of encouraging this parasite, the berries of which are said to be engrafted by the exertions of the mistle-thrush, by which they are carried from tree to tree.

CURIOUS CLAIM UPON A CLERGYMAN.—A case of some importance to the clergy, owners of property, and parochial authorities in London has just been heard before Mr. Barker, at the Clerkenwell Police Court. The plaintiffs, the vestry of St. Pancras, summoned a clergyman for improvements made about his church, under the various metropolitan improvements Acts, for a sum of nearly £700, and the claim was resisted, although it is said that several of the St. Pancras clergy, who have been applied to, have paid the sums at which they had been assessed without resistance. Mr. M. Garvey appeared for the plaintiffs, and Mr. Sleight, barrister, for the defendant. Mr. Garvey said—The defendant is the Rev. A. R. G. Thomas, Incumbent of St. Paul's Church, Camden-square, and the claim made upon him was for £690 11s. 10d. for paths and footways made round his church. He contended that as the Incumbent of the church he was the owner of the freehold, because induction to the church made him *ipso facto* the freeholder of the church. That had been provided by direct legislation. Mr. Thomas was therefore sued as a corporation sole, representing the whole interests of the church for the time being. Mr. Sleight, for the defence, contended that, for the purposes of the Act, Mr. Thomas was not the "owner" of the property. The owner must be the person who receives the rack rent. Mr. Thomas was a salaried officer, paid £400 a year by the trustees, to whom the pew rents were assigned. Mr. magistrate said he should reserve his opinion. In any case the matter will, it is believed, be taken to the Court of Queen's Bench.

THE HOUSE OF DETENTION, CLERKENWELL.—In 1615 the Middlesex justices built a House of Correction upon a plot of garden ground in Clerkenwell purchased by them. The ground and the building cost about £2500. On Shrove Tuesday, 1617, the turbulent London 'prentices "had a cast at the new Bridewell beyond St. John-street." About 1630, and again in 1651, many religious and dangerous enthusiasts were incarcerated here for blasphemy. In 1661 Pepys visited this prison to see a friend of his wife, who was confined therein. On Shrove Tuesday, 1668, the London 'prentices again assailed the prison, and released therefrom some of their companions. In 1669 Richard Baxter was imprisoned in this gaol. In May, 1679, there was a "fire at the New Prison, by Clerkenwell, whereby the greater part of the house was burnt down, and it was presumed, on very violent suspicions, to be set fire by a Papist that was there in custody, and by that means escaped." Towards the close of the seventeenth century a new prison was erected on the south side of the old Bridewell, and for many years they stood and did duty together; but about 1804 the latter building was pulled down. In 1774-5 the new prison was rebuilt on a more commodious plan. During the riots of 1780 a party of the insurgents came to this gaol and insisted on the release of the prisoners. They soon broke open the wicket door, and brought shavings in order to set fire to the prison; but some of them reflecting that, the street being narrow, the flames might hurt the innocent neighbourhood, desisted (how unlike the Fenians!) and with pickaxes they broke open the gates and got the prisoners out. In 1781 a disturbance broke out in the new prison, and the prisoners attempted to break open the gates; but after a skirmish in which three prisoners were killed and twelve wounded the rest were subdued. In 1818 the gaol was almost entirely rebuilt on a more extensive plan, and the ground originally covered by the old Bridewell, and more besides, was comprised within the new walls of the House of Detention, as this building was then called.

POLICE PRECAUTIONS.—The police authorities at Great Scotland-yard, acting in concert with the Home Office, have disposed of the whole of the force under their command in a manner which is regarded as the best for their protection against Fenian outrages. The several detachments and stations have been placed within rapid communication, and the reserves are on such a footing that very strong bodies of armed police, mounted and foot, can be quickly dispatched to any part of the metropolis. The officers of the Guards are also prepared to support them on the instant. Within a few minutes a strong force of the Guards and police could be brought into action; and, if necessary, in a very short time they would be aided by some thousands of troops, all of whom carry the Snider rifle. So far as any direct attack is concerned, the authorities could immediately repress it; but it is not thought that hostility will be shown in any such manner. The only apprehension is that outrages may be attempted which would equal in recklessness the Manchester attack and the one in Clerkenwell. A very large number of detectives are on duty, and every place where public or private property which it is thought might be a point of attack is closely watched by them. The Tower, the various Royal buildings, and every depot of arms belonging to the regular volunteer service, are carefully guarded. The Government has had information recently forwarded to them which caused an apprehension that if anything were attempted it would be a seizure of arms, as the Irish constabulary, in particular, have at various times taken a very large quantity from the conspirators. Special reports are made throughout the day, so that the Commissioners at the chief office are continually informed of all that is passing. At the same time, persons having the control of important business premises would do well to see that they are properly watched, especially in case of fire. The fire brigade, under command of Captain Shaw, is, of course, always kept in a state for instant service. Instructions have been sent from the Home Secretary to the vestries of the various metropolitan parishes inviting them to swear in special constables to assist the police in the protection of public and private property in the metropolis against incendiary fires, or other secret and dangerous means by which the lives and property of the loyal subjects of her Majesty might be endangered.

THE WOUNDED DAISY.

BY M. B. SMEDLEY.

At twilight in beautiful summers,
When all the dew is shed,
And all the singers and hummers
Are safe at home in bed,
In many a nook of the meadow
Fairies may linger and lurk;
Look under the low grass—shadows,
Perhaps you'll see them at work.

Perhaps you'll see them swinging
On see-saw reeds in the dells;
Perhaps you'll hear them ringing
The sweet little heather bells;
Or setting the lilies steady
Before they begin to grow,
Or getting the rosebuds ready
Before it is time to blow.

A fairy was mending a daisy
Which some one had torn in half,
Her sisters all thought her crazy,
And all looked on to laugh.
They showed her scores in the hedges,
And scores that grew by the tarn,
And scores on the green field-edges,
But she went on with her darn.

Then round they cluster and chatter—
How each had a flower more fine;
One shook buttercups at her,
One brought briony twine,
Strong red poppies to vex her,
Tiny bright-eyes to beguile,
Tall green flags to perplex her;
But she worked on all the while.

She worked and she sang this ditty,
While insects wondered and heard
(They knew by the tone of pity
The song was not from a bird.)
"Daisy, somebody hurt you!
Are you frightened at me?
Patient Hope is a virtue,
Wait and you shall see.

"Was it a careless mower
Cut your blossom in twain?
I hope his hand will be slower
When he sees you again.
Was it a step unheeding?
Or was it a stormy gale?
Or was it (how you are bleeding!)
A dark malicious snail?

"They did not know you would suffer,
I think they had never seen;
Slugs and snails may be rougher,
Perhaps, than they always mean.
Do I not hear one sobbing
Down just there at my foot?
Or is it only the throbbing
Down in your poor little root?

"Daisy, you were so merry
Where you modestly grew,
Earth was generous, very;
Heaven was pleasant for you;
Never teasing your neighbour,
Neither forward nor slack;
Do you feel as I labour
Some of your joy come back?

"Ah, you tremble a little!
Have I hurt you at last?
If you were not so brittle,
I could mend you so fast!
No, there's nothing distressful—
Only a quiver of bliss,
Daisy, I've been successful!
Grow, and give me a kiss!

"Now I've mended you neatly,
All the fairies can see;
Now you look at me sweetly
Are you grateful to me?
I'll go hiding behind you,
Then in a day or two,
Perhaps a baby will find you,
And I shall hear it coo.

"Yes, your cheeks may be whiter
Than the rest of your race;
Other eyes may be brighter,
Others fairer in face;
But no flower that unclozes
Can be precious as you,
Not an army of roses
Fighting all the year through!"

Then the fairies confess it
As that daisy revives;
All come round and caress it,
All so glad that it lives.
No one ventures to doubt it,
Hosts of penitent fays
Make their dance-rings about it,
Sing their songs in its praise.

Years of fading and growing
Pass—the daisy is not!
Sweeter grass-blossoms are growing
Still by that little spot.
There each fairy that hovered
Sang while pausing above:
"Here the daisy recovered!
Here's a footprint of Love!" — "Good Cheer,"
Christmas Number of "Good Words."

A LIFE-BOAT AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.—The Crystal Palace directors have applied to the National Life-boat Institution to place in the central transept of the Crystal Palace, during the ensuing Christmas holidays, one of its spare new life-boats, like those which have been doing such good work in the recent storms. The committee of the Life-boat Society have complied with this request, and arrangements are accordingly now being made to send to the palace a fully equipped life-boat, mounted on its transporting carriage. A somewhat similar boat was exhibited in the Paris Universal Exhibition during the past summer.

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' SCHOOLS.—In consequence of the increasing and urgent claims on this institution, the board of management have resolved to add to the present building two new wings, which will contain schools, dormitories, and the necessary offices, capable of accommodating about a hundred additional children. The works are now in active progress, and it is hoped that they will be completed early next year. The success which has hitherto attended this excellent charity has been most gratifying to the numerous friends who have liberally aided its funds, and to the members of the board, who have devoted their time to secure its maintenance and efficiency; hundreds of commercial travellers' orphan and necessitous children have found a home in which they have been carefully trained and educated, and afterwards assisted to obtain suitable positions in life. This new effort to extend the benefits of the institution will involve an outlay of at least £6000, which has to be raised by voluntary subscriptions; and it is earnestly hoped that commercial gentlemen generally, as well as all others who take an interest in the welfare of helpless orphan children, will respond liberally to this new claim on their Christian philanthropy.

SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

THE QUEEN left Windsor Castle on Tuesday morning for Osborne, where her Majesty proposes to keep the festival of Christmas.

MR. GLADSTONE proposes to offer himself for the Liverpool portion of South Lancashire (now to be divided into two parts) rather than the Manchester portion.

MR. WILLIAM LOWTHER, second son of the late Hon. Colonel Lowther, offers himself as a candidate to represent Westmorland.

LORD CHARLES HAMILTON, the Duke of Hamilton's brother, has arrived in Abyssinia from India, having volunteered to join the expedition.

THE MONT CENIS TUNNEL was advanced 109 metres during November.

A SPECULATOR has bought an island in the Ohio River and stocked it with black cats, with the object of rearing the animals for the sake of their fur.

THE EARTHQUAKES AT ST. THOMAS have been most destructive. Every house was destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. The loss of property is immense; but, fortunately, the loss of life is comparatively small, not exceeding fifty persons.

THE AUTHORITIES connected with the Albert memorial in Hyde Park have decided on the erection of a statue to the late Augustus Welby Pugin, as the representative of architecture.

JEFFERSON DAVIS visited a Catholic fair in Richmond, Virginia, recently, and was presented with a "musical cigar-case."

THE TAKE OF SPRATS off the Hampshire coast last week was the largest known for some years; nearly 1000 bushels were sold at Southampton for sixpence a bushel, to be converted into manure.

THE MONUMENT TO LORD PALMERSTON, voted by the House of Commons for Westminster Abbey, has been intrusted by the Chief Commissioner of Works to Mr. Jackson, an artist not hitherto generally known in monumental sculpture.

ABOUT £1000 have been raised to build a consumption hospital at the Undercliff, in the Isle of Wight.

THREE IRONCLADS—the Tennessee, Nashville, and Osage, the two former noted Confederate rams—were sold at auction in New Orleans lately. They brought 21,000 dols. The Tennessee cost 1,500,000 dols. in Confederate money, and the Nashville 1,000,000 dols.

M. ROCHER'S RECENT SPEECH is being circulated through France in the form of a pamphlet. This is done by the Emperor's order, and leaves no doubt that his Majesty entirely approves of and ratifies the opinions pronounced by his Minister.

THE ENGINEERS of Manchester have subscribed a large sum of money (one firm, Messrs. Beyer, Peacock, and Co., gave no less than £3000) for the endowment of a Chair of Engineering in connection with Owens College. The fund is so far advanced towards completion as to justify the early appointment of a professor.

A RICH OLD LADY, ninety years of age, has just died at Clifton, in Somersetshire, who for a long time past believed that she never could sleep except in her carriage. She used therefore to ride out in her carriage every afternoon, with the blinds drawn, to take her daily rest. The carriage was seen daily travelling at a snail's pace over Clifton Downs.

THE NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS who have gone to the support of the Pontifical Throne brings up the effective of the Papal army to about 11,000 men, consisting of 3500 zouaves, 3000 gendarmes, 1500 of the legion, 1000 native regiment, 1500 foreign battalion, 300 dragoons, 80 artillery, and 120 engineers.

MR. SPURGEON has been advising some of his followers to stay at home on week days and mind their business, instead of running about to preach in little chapels; fewer would become bankrupt. He also advised his female devotees to stay at home "darning" their husbands' stockings occasionally, instead of always flocking to indulge in a little religious excitement.

A GREAT MEETING of the letter-carriers of the metropolis was held, on Monday evening, in Exeter Hall. Mr. John Bennett, of Cheapside, presided. The object of the meeting was to take measures for the improvement of the condition of the postmen, and especially to urge the necessity of an addition being made to their pay. Resolutions in accordance with the objects of the meeting were passed.

WESTON, the pedestrian, has arrived at Chicago, having accomplished the feat of walking from Portland, 1237½ miles, to Chicago in twenty-six walking days. He had two hours to spare, and was received by enormous crowds of people in Chicago. Weston failed in all his attempts to walk one hundred miles in twenty-four hours, and on the last occasion made eighty-six miles in 21h. 15 min. The stakes were 10,000 dols. a side for the feat; but Weston loses six tenths for not having walked the one hundred miles, and therefore gets but 4000 dols.

SIR WILLIAM COGHILAN, Political Resident at Aden, has written a letter in defence of Mr. Rassam against the attacks which have been made on that gentleman. He considers that Mr. Rassam has exhibited great tact and ability in his relations with Theodoros; and he defends him against the imputations which have been cast on his integrity by stating that the money which he received from the King was duly reported to his superiors that it might be carried to the public account.

LAW AND CRIME.

THE various sentiments of horror, indignation, and contempt excited by the last great Fenian outrage have found expression in the columns of all our contemporaries. One special element of its cowardice alone appears to have escaped comment. We allude to the fact of a female accomplice having been allowed to take such a prominent part in the carrying out of the plot as to lead to her seizure almost at the moment of the commission of the crime. Surely the slightest manly feeling might have suggested to these wretched conspirators that, even if the woman's services were necessary to establish a communication with the prisoners in the gaol, she might at least have been kept away from the immediate scene of the explosion.

We have at last experience of the so-called "Fenian fire." Its principal ingredient is evidently phosphorus, and it is by no means difficult to learn the name of the solvent employed. On each occasion on which it is known to have been used it has proved a failure. It carries in itself the necessity of such failure and the counteraction of its secret use. As soon as it begins to burn it emits the brilliant light peculiar to phosphorus in combustion, and thus at once betrays the danger and its cause. Water, it is said, will not extinguish it. The blue phosphorescent flame still plays over the mass after heaps of sand and rubbish have been thrown upon the blaze. Well, here is a problem for our chemists, and one, as it appears to us, so easy of solution that we can almost confidently promise an authoritative answer next week—how is the "Fenian fire" to be promptly extinguished and rendered innocuous? Without pretending to accuracy of chemical knowledge, we would venture to suggest the use of chloride of lime. This useful salt is not only cheap and easily procurable, but is in common domestic use. Speaking under correction, and without experiment, we are inclined to conceive that chloride of lime thrown on blazing phosphorus would at once combine to form an incombustible compound.

THE LIVERPOOL WORKING MEN AND THE FENIANS.—On Monday evening a number of the working men of Liverpool held a public meeting, at which they agreed upon the following resolution:—"That this committee beg to offer their warmest thanks to his Worship the Mayor, the magistrates of the borough, the county magistrates, and also to Major Greig and the police force, for the prompt and efficient measures adopted by them on Sunday last for the suppression of the intended procession of Fenian sympathisers with the murderers of Sergeant Brett." A deputation waited upon the Mayor on Tuesday at the Townhall to present the resolution, and in reply the Mayor stated that it afforded him great satisfaction that the course which had been taken by the authorities had been so heartily supported by the working men of the town. A letter from Mr. Hardy, the Home Secretary, has been received by the law clerk to the county magistrates, thanking that body for the prompt and effective arrangements which they had made to keep the peace on Sunday and to prevent any procession being formed. We understand that the Mayor of Liverpool (Mr. Whitley), Major Greig (the head constable), and several gentlemen holding influential positions in the town, have received threatening letters.

CLUB CHAT.—We have reason to believe that several insurance offices have insisted upon the instant discharge of Irish hands from the important gasworks. The misguided men who have brought about these hideous disasters will, no doubt, bring ruin and distress into many a loyal Irish home. This is not the first instance, or will be the last, of the proverb realised, "Save me from my friends!"—The dastardly attempt to destroy a portion of the House of Detention, and which brought ruin and death on innocent and unoffending people, has been made the subject of a very clever picture by Mr. E. C. Barnes. This gentleman was on the spot shortly after the explosion took place, and from interest he had with the authorities was enabled to set to work at once. The view taken is from the interior of the prison-yard, looking through the breach at the shattered houses on the opposite side of the street. The picture, which is exceedingly powerful in treatment, is being photographed by the London Stereoscopic Company.—We understand that the Hon. Mrs. George Gifford, authoress of "King's Bayard," is about to publish a novel entitled "Uncle Rex." The plot is partly founded upon the case of Sir Roger Tichborne.—Echoes from the Clubs.

Literature.

ELEGANT GIFT-BOOKS.

The "Edina" Burns: Poems and Songs by Robert Burns. With Original Illustrations on Wood. Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo.

Many editions of the works of the immortal Scottish bard have passed under our notice within the last few years, but none equal to the "Edina Burns" just published by Mr. Nimmo. Indeed, we know of only one other edition of the poet's works that can at all be compared to this, and that is the one issued some years ago by Messrs. Blackie, which has long occupied a prominent place on our own shelves, and has afforded us many a pleasant hour of recreative and refreshing reading. But as the illustrations to Messrs. Blackie's edition are executed upon steel and copper, the work is necessarily expensive; whereas Mr. Nimmo, having adopted the more modern and pliable material, wood, is able to offer the present handsome volume at a comparatively low price. The work, as the title-page tells us, contains merely the poems and songs, together with a few notes and the usual glossary, omitting correspondence, diaries, life, &c. It consequently is not a complete edition of all that Burns produced, or that is interesting connected with him; but to this it makes no pretension. The volume contains all the bard's poetical productions, and professes to do no more. Those who want to know everything about Burns, and to see all that he ever wrote, will find what they want in Blackie's edition; while those who are inclined to be content with his poems and songs, have them here in a most elegant and attractive garb. The illustrations include drawings by R. Herdman, R.S.A.; Walter H. Paton, R.S.A.; Samuel Bough, A.R.S.A.; Gourlay Steel, R.S.A.; D. O. Hill, R.S.A.; John McWhirter, &c.; and have been engraved by R. Paterson, in the best style of the wood engraver's art. The book is beautifully printed by Clark, of Edinburgh; and is strongly, handsomely, and tastefully bound. The paper, moreover, is very thick, and nicely toned; and altogether a more elegant volume has seldom come under our notice. Not but that exception might be taken to some of the plates. For instance, the illustration to the "Cottar's Saturday Night," where the pose of the head is not pleasing of "the saint, the father, and the husband," who, to our thinking, looks more like a victim laying his head upon the block than a simple Scottish peasant engaged in devotion. Then the grouping of the family is not such as was wont to obtain when we participated in family worship in Scotland. In our time all present on such occasions knelt during prayer; and to make Jenny and the "neibor lad" sit upright at the table, while the rest of the family maintain nearly their ordinary positions and attitudes, is, to our fancy, a little absurd. The mountain daisy, again, is much too large for the accessories. But is this a mountain daisy? If so, we are sorry, for it destroys a pleasing illusion of ours. We had deemed Burns's "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower" to be something very different from this long, lanky thing, which, instead of "scarce rearing above the parent earth its tender form," or seeking "the random field of clod or stone," towers above them all, if proportion have any place in things, "by the head and shoulders," as Saul did among the people. And stay! Is not this illustration familiar to us? Reach down that blue-cloth bound volume from the shelf there. Ah! we thought so. Here is the same mountain daisy doing duty as an illustration in another edition of Burns, published by Mr. Nimmo in 1855; only there it had a background and accessories that rendered it safe from being "turned down by the plough," for no plough could have passed where the daisy was made to grow. Here we have the background cut away, and the flower itself increased in size, which only has the effect of rendering the daisy more out of proportion still. Then the faces of the younger players in the card party, illustrative of the life of "the gentry" as depicted in the "Twa Dogs," have a hoydenish expression, neither quite natural to the class nor consistent with the text. In compensation for such faults as these, however, we have, in the illustrations to "Hallowe'en" and other poems, some bits of delineation that are really charming. We would specially point to the "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks," the "Rigs o' barley," and many others, as highly meritorious drawings. In a prefatory note, the publisher informs us that this has been called the "Edina" Burns in order to commemorate the poet's reception in and connection with the Scottish capital, celebrated by the bard himself as "Edina, Scotia's darling seat." The note proceeds to say:—"If the designation of this volume may, in some measure, serve to keep alive and warm the memory of the association between Burns and the city where first he tasted the sweets of fame, the publisher trusts that the volume itself will not be deemed to prove the designation either inappropriate or presumptuous. The graphic and the typographic arts of the Scottish capital have united in the endeavour to give not only elegance, but also sterling value to the book; and, as the resources of Edinburgh alone have been relied on for its production, so upon Edinburgh alone will be reflected the credit of such public favour and success as may deservedly fall to the lot of the 'Edina Burns.'"

We hope none of our readers are unacquainted with the charming pastoral song, "Lassie wi' the Lint-white Locks," Mr. Herdman's excellent illustration to which we have reproduced; but, lest there should be such benighted individuals, we may as well quote the words:—

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.

Now nature cleeds the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee;
Oh, wilt thou share its joy wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my dearie, O?

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonny lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

And when the welcome simmer-shower
Has cheered ilk drooping little flower,
We'll to the breathing woodbine tower
At sultry noon, my dearie, O.

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's homeward way;
Through yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my dearie, O.

And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest;
Enclasp'd to my faithful breast,
I'll comfort thee, my dearie, O.

The Legendary Ballads of England and Scotland. Compiled and Edited by JOHN S. ROBERTS. With Original Illustrations and Steel Portrait. London: Frederick Warne and Co.

How wonderful is the hold retained by our old ballads on the minds, not merely of the common people, whose sole literature they once constituted, but of almost all cultivated men! It is not merely that these ballads tell of old times, old scenes, old incidents, and of an order of men and women and a condition of life that have long passed away, but that they have in themselves a poetic fervour and a simple pathos that are irresistibly attractive. This it is, no doubt, that constitutes the secret of their power, and accounts for their still being so popular, and for the fact that men of the highest order of intelligence have delighted in collecting, arranging, collating, comparing, amending, and annotating those "old-world stories," as well as for the other fact, of equal significance, that good collections of old ballads are always sure of a hearty welcome. "A book of ballads," if it only contain the genuine materials, is certain to sell; and that, too, notwithstanding the fact that innumerable collections are already before the public. Indeed, the attractive influence of our old ballad literature seems inexhaustible; and when these ancient favourites are presented to us in so elegant a shape as this handsome volume by Mr. Roberts, of course the desire to possess the book is irresistible. Mr. Roberts has taken great pains with

his collection—indeed, as he tells us, the work of editing the volume has been truly a labour of love to him; and though students of ballad lore will miss some favourite pieces, which have been rejected on the score of doubtful antiquity, and will find innumerable variations from the readings with which they are familiar, an examination of the volume must satisfy everyone that nothing has been inserted or omitted, and no emendation made, without careful comparison and anxious thought. The omissions, however, are very few in regard to which any question is likely to arise; and certainly no ballad is inserted that is not worthy of its place. The book is a handsome small octavo, nicely printed on toned paper, with carmine lines round the pages, and is beautifully bound in strong cloth boards, coloured red, green, and gold. A portrait of the father of ballad-collectors, Dr. Percy, is prefixed, and several excellent illustrations are dispersed throughout the work. Of the merits of these engravings our readers will be able to judge from the specimen we have reproduced. It is illustrative of the story of "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" (in some collections called "Fair Willie and Sweet Annie," the argument of which is to this effect:—Lord Thomas and Fair Annet (Ellinor in other versions) are lovers; but the gentleman, being of a worldly mind, is induced by advice of friends and love of pelf to abandon fair Annet, whose main possession is her wondrous beauty, and to marry "the nut-brown maid," who has "gowd and gear, owsen and kye." The deserted fair one, however, attends the mercenary Lord's wedding with her rich but uncomely rival; and part of the scene which ensues is thus described:—

She sat her by the nut-brown bride,
And her e'en they were sae clear,
Lord Thomas he clean forgat the
bride,
When fair Annet she drew near.
He had a rose into his hand,
And he gave it kisses three,
And, reaching by the nut-brown
bride,
Laid it on fair Annet's knee.

This is the incident depicted in our Engraving; and the dénouement, according to Mr. Roberts's version, which, however, varies greatly throughout from some others we know, is as follows:—

When night was come and day was
gone,
And a' men bound to bed,
Lord Thomas and the nut-brown
bride
In their chamber were laid.
The firsten bower that he cam' till,
There was right dowie cheer;
Her mither and her three sisters
Were makin' to Annet a sark.

The nexten bower that he cam' till,
There was right dowie cheer;
Her father and her seven brethren
Were makin' to Annet a bier.
The lasten bower that he cam' till,
O heavy was his care,
The dead candles were burning bright,
And fair Annet streekit there.

"Weel brook ye o' your nut-brown
bride,
Between ye and the wa';
And sae will I o' my winding-sheet,
That suits me best ava."

"Weel brook ye o' your nut-brown
bride,
Between ye and the stock;
And sae will I o' my black, black
kist,
That has neither key nor lock!"

"Weel brook ye o' your nut-brown
bride,
And o' your bridal bed;
And sae will I o' the cauld, cauld
mools
That sune will hap my head."

Lord Thomas rose, put on his elaes,
Drew till him his hose and shoon;
And he is on to Annet's bower,
By the light o' the moon.

From these extracts ballad-readers will see that it was not without reason that we warned them that they would find great variations in the versions adopted by Mr. Roberts from those of other editors. For instance, Mr. Allingham's version, in Macmillan and Co.'s "Ballad-Book," differs not only throughout the action, but especially in the details of the catastrophe, from the above; but both versions are fine, and readers may take their choice. The two last stanzas we have seen differently printed and differently applied—that is, to the hero and heroine of other ballads. Still, "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" may have been the original source of the beautiful idea of the sympathetic "birk and brier." A similar idea, it will be recollected, is to be found in Lord Byron's "Bride of Abydos." We cannot, however, go into critical details as to the merits of various readings or points of originality of ideas. Suffice it that we have received from Mr. Roberts a very elegant and excellent collection, which we, at least, shall gladly allow a place on the library shelf devoted to "books of ballads."

Among the books adapted for gifts which lie before us, one of the best and brightest is *The New Forest: its History and its Scenery*, by John R. Wise, with sixty-three illustrations, drawn by Walter Crane, engraved by W. J. Linton, and two maps (London: Smith, Elder, and Co.). This is a second and cheaper edition of one of the most beautiful and interesting books issued by Messrs. Smith, Elder, and Co. for many years, and we warmly recommend it, whether for library purposes or as a gift-book. The very spirit of the woodland is in the pages—the descriptions and the woodcuts helping each other like brothers; and there is much incidental information. On every page some remark might be made which would, perhaps, interest the reader. But we will stop at one, opening the work honestly at random on page 282. The word "dray" is surely quite common in modern poetry, applied to a squirrel's nest. It is in Cowper, for example, and, we believe, in many other places. However, all we have space for here is to say that the book can scarcely be praised too highly.

Christ and Christendom: being the Boyle Lectures for 1866, delivered at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, by E. H. Plumptre, M.A. (London: A. Strahan), may well be considered an appropriate gift-book for the season. Strauss prophesied that Christian belief in Europe would split and go down upon the problem of the life of Christ. Mr. Plumptre argues *en sens inverse*, and has produced a short attractive treatise, which, perhaps, exhibits in a higher degree than any previous work of his the best characteristics of his mind, we were going to say his nature, but that would be going beyond the limits of public criticism; even in private one is usually impelled to deal with a beautiful character as Lancelot dealt with the loveliness of Guinevere:—

Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin in speaking—

On second thoughts, however, we must add that the value of a book like this, for the purpose of its author, or for any good purpose whatever, must depend so largely on its moral and spiritual aroma, that a reviewer is scarcely at liberty to omit, for reasons of critical etiquette, the remark that the volume is singularly winning. It is too wise, too good, too reticent where reticence is heavenly, as well as too thoughtful, and, in passages, even too profound, to please "the hard school;" but a more gracious gift for a gracious season, from any one who wishes to make a present in the spirit in which the Boyle bequest was made, could scarcely be indicated.

Mr. R. M. Ballantyne is so well known as a writer of stories for the young that it is only necessary to announce his *Silver Lake; or, Lost in the Snow* (London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder), and to add that it is prettily got up, and has been found a charming book by the young people on whom it has been tried.

We hope again to refer to Mr. Longfellow's new version of Dante's "Inferno," "Purgatorio," and "Paradiso," published by Messrs. Routledge and Sons; but as this, too, is a book eminently fitted for the season, we refer to it here. There are three handsome volumes, very clearly printed, with the verses numbered; and, taking into account the notes, we should say that an intelligent reader would get more of the essence of mediæval Christianity out of this book than out of any dozen others that could be named. Of course, it is only in cultivated circles that Dante would be thought of as a gift-book. Even where

Cary's or other translations are already possessed, this version would be greedily welcomed; but where the receiver possessed no other version of the great Italian, the gift would indeed be valued. We do not know the price, but it cannot be anything extravagant, and the get-up is pretty.

BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG.

Oliver Wyndham. A Tale of the Great Plague. By the Author of "Naomi." London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder.

Castles and their Heroes. By BARBARA HUTTON. With Illustrations by Georgina Bowers. London: Griffith and Farran.

The Cabinet of the Earth Unlocked. By EDWARD STEANE JACKSON, M.A., F.G.S. London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder.

Stories of the Gorilla Country. Narrated for Young People. By PAUL DU CHAILLU, Author of "Discoveries in Equatorial Africa," &c. With numerous Illustrations. London: Sampson Low and Co.

The Young Nile-Voyagers. By ANNE BOWMAN, Author of "Esperanza," &c. Illustrated by J. B. Zwecker. London: George Routledge and Sons.

Records of Noble Lives. By W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS. London and Edinburgh: T. Nelson and Sons.

The Book of Cats. A Chit-Chat Chronicle, &c. By CHARLES H. ROSS. With Twenty Illustrations by the Author. London: Griffith and Farran.

Wonderful Inventions: from the Mariner's Compass to the Electric Telegraph Cable. By JOHN TIMBS. Numerous Engravings. London: Routledge and Sons.

The Treasures of the Earth; or, Mines, Minerals, and Metals. By WILLIAM JONES, F.S.A. London: Fred. Warne and Co.

Thunder and Lightning. By W. DE FONVILLE, Translated by Dr. PIPSON, F.R.S. Thirty-nine Engravings. London: Sampson Low and Co.

Double Acrostics, by Amateurs. Edited by I. S. A. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.

The Essays of Abraham Cowley. With Life, Notes, and Illustrations. London: Sampson Low and Co.

Paul Gerhardt's Spiritual Songs. Translated by John Kelly. London: Strahan.

Told in the Twilight; or, Short Stories for Long Evenings. By SYDNEY DARYL. With Illustrations by Gussie Bridgman. London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder.

Abdallah; or, the Four-leaved Shamrock. By EDOUARD RENE LEFERRE-LABOULAYE. Translated by Mary L. Booth. London: Sampson Low and Co.

Old Merry's Annual. London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder.

Berton's Boy's Annual. A Volume of Fact, Fiction, History, and Adventure. With Illustrations. Edited by S. O. BERTON. London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler.

The Children's Hour Annual. Second Series. Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter, and Co.

The Boy's Own Book. A Complete Encyclopedia of Sports and Pastimes, Athletic, Scientific, and Recreative. A new Edition. London: Lockwood and Co.

"Oliver Wyndham" has already run a successful career in the pages of *Our Own Fireside*, and in its new form it will make as nice a present as many that have recently come under notice, although its main subject is far more infatuating than cheerful. The oldest inhabitant cannot be expected to remember the state of things during the Plague, rather more than two hundred years since; but vivid literature has given us great assistance in that matter, as well as in pestilences elsewhere. Manzoni's "Betrothed," Lord Lytton's "Rienzi," Horace Smith's "Brambletye House," and Ainsworth's "Old Saint Paul's"—to speak of modern times only—have put the horrors in brilliant colours before the people; and the same office, considerably modified for tender years, has now been done by the author of "Naomi." As a picture of London life and death during the Great Plague, it is very effective. There is a certain story of cousins finding out their relationships, with good fortunes to boot; a happy marriage; many sinners and infidels converted; and some few, who will not be converted, who are stricken down by the "prevailing epidemic." From the author of "Naomi" some such decided moral as that was, of course, to be expected; but it is not offensively done. It will be as well to warn lovers of light literature that "Oliver Wyndham" reads somewhat like a very long sermon, and that every page is studded with passages of Scripture in italics.

In an introductory chapter the reader learns that "Castles and their Heroes" is a series of fireside readings to young people. A castle is as good a subject as any whereupon to hang picturesque historical accounts; and, though these pages cannot be compared with the late Mr. Edgar's admirable volumes for youth, they have their merit, and may be fairly commended. Conway Castle tells all about Llewellyn, and Edward a conquest of Wales, together with interesting accounts of the bards, &c. Willemsotewick has for its hero the martyr Ridley, who was born there. Chepstow has been celebrated for its prisoners—notably, Henry Marten. Corfe Castle is remarkable for its defence by the heroic Lady Banks. Raglan Castle is associated with the two great Marquises of Worcester, Warwick with the Warwicks, Montgomery with the Herberts, and Ludlow with the Lords Marchers of Wales, not to mention John Milton and "Comus." Carisbrooke, again, has its more solemn memories of Charles and the little pious Princess Elizabeth. All these subjects, with much extraneous matter, are nicely depicted, and will tend to make history more than usually pleasant reading. The book might fairly have been extended, but, perhaps, the authoress may see her way to another volume, as the present is likely to be a success. The half dozen full-page illustrations are well executed, and much better adornments than such works usually find.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Jackson will find good encouragement in his endeavour to make geology comprehensible to little minds. In the "Cabinet of the Earth Unlocked" he literally opens his cabinet, takes out his bones, spars, granites, sandstones, &c., and tells the surrounding youth of his family what they mean, and how they are related to the history of the earth. He will not be scientific, but talks to them in terribly plain English, and banishes all the horribly composite hard words to the bottom of the page, and then appeals to the printer as to whether foot-notes are ever read. Mr. Jackson's style is very light and pleasing, whilst his information is sound; and he cannot fail to make himself understood by his plain straightforward manner and liberal supply of woodcuts. The book does not go far, but only pretends, or hopes, to go far enough to awaken a desire for more knowledge on one of the most interesting subjects possible. It thoroughly deserves to achieve its object.

Mr. du Chailly's book for young readers calls up interesting reminiscences of his two "big books." What has been read before may be read again here, and perhaps with extra pleasure for pleasure-readers, since here is just the amusing cream of all the author's experience, whilst the vast residuum of science and discussion remains in its proper place, still to be fought over, and accepted or rejected, as the public may determine. A more fascinating book for boys can scarcely be met, and to boys it is addressed. They will like Mr. du Chailly's adventures, his pluck, and his general style; and they will probably be less careful than their scientific elders to take the volume's contents with a certain grain of salt. Although treating of the "gorilla country," there is, after all, but little about the gorilla in these pages; but the pictures of savage life are the freshest and most original of modern times. Upon the whole, the author gives a good character to the natives—except to the gorillas; and has even a good word to say for the celebrated cannibal Fans. "But you must not think that the Fans are continually eating human flesh. They eat it when they can get it, but not every day. They kill no one on purpose to be eaten." Despite

this Arcadian picture of savage life, Mr. Du Chaillu seems to have torn himself away to fresh woods and pastures new, in that nearest attempt to a civilised country, England; and we are quite sure that no boy who devours the present Christmas volume will regret that the giver of so much pleasure was not devoured. It would be painful to a sensitive mind, whilst contemplating the Christmas dinner, to think that so lively an author had "been taken down to dinner" in a somewhat different sense. The book is a handsome book, with what Cromwell called "no nonsense" about it; and the very many woodcuts are really excellent bits of art.

The *Young Nile-Voyagers* comes upon the Christmas critic like one of those morning dreams which come in the waking hours and recur incessantly. Surely, for the last twenty years we have known every inch of the Africa here described, as well as the jolly young heroes and the excellent old travellers with whom they luckily meet. We have a poor parson dying in poverty, and a pair of daring young sons resolved on going to Egypt to find out some good friends who have gone rather farther than most travellers range. The youths go, and are soon left on desert sands; they become slaves, on and off; fine sportsmen; skilful at building huts, &c.; and, from first to last, meet with their friends and many more travelling English. United, they make up a capital party, and return home triumphant. But, in the mean time, they have undergone perils which fairly equal anything which Captain Mayne Reid may have dreamed of in his wildest moments, and rejected as "going too far" at his desk after breakfast. But no matter. This style of story-book is not likely to lose its admirers because of its intensity. So long as it is only an occasional black man eaten, an occasional black young lady saved and Christianised, and so long as dear young master and mistress return safely to that dear old nurse who never seems to die, such books as "The Young Nile-Voyagers" are sure to find numerous patrons. But we cannot fail to fancy some faults in African geography in these pages; or else the youngsters must know how to cross "boundless" deserts much more easily than grown-up travellers usually manage it. Prowess, however, is the charm, and all are bound to respect it. As to the pictures, Mr. J. B. Zwecker is not quite so fascinating and graceful as he was a year or two ago.

Mr. W. H. Davenport Adams's "Records of Noble Lives" is a book on so good a subject, and is so little dependent upon plan, that it cannot be too often repeated. But Mr. Adams has a certain plan, and one to which nobody will take objection—he designs to illustrate English character. Thus, Sir Philip Sidney represents English chivalrousness; sagacity and adherence to fact are illustrated in Lord Bacon; Puritan rigour in Robert Blake; steadfast observance of law and order in Monk, Lord Albemarle; philanthropy and disdain of show in William Penn; and unrelenting enterprise in the Australian explorers Burke and Wills. In his biography of Bacon, Mr. Adams gives in his allegiance to Mr. Hepworth Dixon; but, as a rule, he consults early authorities as well as the latest. Each life is supplemented with a kind of summing up, which is well weighed and thoroughly impartial; and whilst, in some cases, much may be said on the other side concerning the "nobility" of the subjects of these memoirs, they are only the more likely to provoke thought and criticism from the youthful readers for whom the volume is intended. Mr. Adams indulges in just a little too much high-flown language, and seems to think it necessary to make his prose poetic, because he quotes very much poetry.

"The Book of Cats!" Mr. C. H. Ross is a lover of cats—bleat him!—and has much to say about his favourites and friends of the feline species. From all kinds of sources he has collected catlore, and has not hesitated to incorporate any particle of information which can possibly be connected with cat-kind. Natural history from approved sources, and anecdotes (true or untrue) from all sources, are here collected together, and the result is at least amusing. It is "bookmaking" all over, and contains extracts from books where cat-literature might be least expected. Even Henry Mayhew's "London Labour and the London Poor" is drawn upon for the article on London cat's-meat. In this way Mr. Ross has managed to be curious and instructive, as well as amusing; and has added to the other charms of his volume some illustrations which are certainly more grotesque than artistic.

For real value Mr. Timbs's "Wonderful Inventions" ranks with the highest class of books for young people which the Christmas season sends. Small books like it, and portions of it, have been seen in plenty; but here is a substantial and well-printed octavo volume, with excellent woodcuts, telling all about all "inventions," discoveries, and improvements. Some fifteen to twenty years since Messrs. Chapman and Hall published a good book of the kind on a much smaller scale, some of the pictures in which may be recognised in Mr. Timbs's present volume. They were well worth preserving; and how far one book may be connected with the other is not worth inquiry—the valuable point being that the new book is quite complete up to the present day. The new applications of steam are largely dwelt upon; and the electric telegraph, which at present looks unimprovable, gets a very complete history. The revolution in shipbuilding is also a thing of to-day. These subjects given at length make the book modern; but such ancient matters as the microscope, clocks and watches, cotton-spinning, the printing-press, &c., are in no way neglected. Very much miscellaneous matter connected with the various subjects contribute to make the book as entertaining as it is useful. It is sure not to be neglected.

"The Treasures of the Earth" is a carefully-written account of such trifles as gold, precious stones, and coal. Mr. Jones has made it attractive by a sensible, plain style, and by interesting accounts and anecdotes of distinguished people who have been in any way connected with the various branches of mining. But even young people are supposed to know how gold and coal are found; and it is rather to such matters as salt or quicksilver mines that interest will attach. It is very embarrassing, in middle age, to find how fresh some of these "Books for the Young" appear; and surely, in a year or two, the young people will set us all down as very ignorant. And so we meekly accept, and are thankful for, Mr. Jones's handsome little volume, where, by-the-way, neat pictures are to be found, and substantial treatment in paper, print, and cloth.

There are thirty-nine well-executed engravings to M. de Fouvieu's "Thunder and Lightning," and almost every one is calculated to carry a thrill to the heart. The "forces of nature" are



"LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS."—FROM THE
"EDINA" BURNS.

detailed here—with a vengeance. M. de Fouvieu is very French; but Dr. Phipson has made him as English as was possible, and his stories and speculations teem with deep interest. In a certain sense, in no way dangerous, many people have been "struck" by lightning; but the stories told here will make them thank their stars that it was no worse. The work is fairly attractive.

Frequently, on Wednesday afternoons, over our *Fan*, after regretting the absence of Nicholas, and seeking consolation in the

The "Essays of Abraham Cowley" may properly be classed among books for the young, on the ground that the old must, or ought to be, already acquainted with them. This little volume, belonging to the "Bayard Series," comprises Cowley's prose works, the "Character of Cromwell," "The Cutler of Coleman-street," &c. There is little danger of Cromwell's memory suffering from the partisan bitterness and personal spleen displayed in the "Discourse on Cromwell's Government," for the passionate and prejudiced denunciations of Cowley are not likely to undo the work so well performed by Carlyle and Merle D'Aubigné. It is easy to have the best in a debate when you have the stating of the arguments both for yourself and your adversary; and, though Cowley possessed this great advantage, one cannot resist the feeling that he gets "some shrewd knocks" from the Protector's shadowy vindicator. Cowley's style, for the period at which he wrote, is singularly pure and elegant, and a second reading of this book makes us thoroughly inclined to indorse Campbell's opinion, that "Cowley's prose stamps him as a man of genius and an improver of the English language." Though we specially commend the book to the attention of the young, we daresay many "oldsters" will, like ourselves, be glad to "renew their youth" in a certain sense, by a perusal of "the gentle Cowley" in this neat, convenient, and cheap form.

A little of everything and something for every one is the rule that seems to evolve itself out of the books that appear about this season. And it is only natural that a book like "Paul Gerhardt's Spiritual Songs" should be issued at present; and equally natural is it to expect that a collection of pieces that have pleased the religious section of one nation and epoch will, in some degree at least, be welcome to a similar class in other lands. We have little doubt, therefore, that these "Spiritual Songs" from the German will be well received in the devout homes of England, and that they will afford a means both of instruction and of advancement in piety to young minds. The pieces have been carefully translated, and are neatly printed and bound; and are, moreover, introduced by a well-written biography of the author.

Sidney Daryl is a name well known among writers for the young, and "Told in the Twilight" is sure to make the name more popular still among those youngsters who love quiet people, quiet scenes, and quiet stories. Some of the tales in this volume have already appeared in *Aunt Judy's Magazine* and others in *Merry and Wise*, while others, again, are published here for the first time. But old and new will be all alike welcome on "long evenings." The illustrations are generally good, that to "Joey the Tumbler" being especially characteristic of the appearance and manners of "street people."

A French professor of law, and writer of erudite works on abstruse branches of legal science, is not the sort of person from whom one would expect a beautiful poetic romance like "Abdallah; or, the Four-Leaved Shamrock," and yet that is the source to which we owe this wonderful Eastern tale, which reads like a fresh chapter of the "Thousand and One Nights."

It would be labour misapplied to attempt to give either an abstract of the story or a criticism upon it: the work is above the latter, and the former would only spoil the effect of a most complete whole. We therefore recommend all lovers of Oriental lore to buy the book and read it often and carefully. It is only necessary to add that the translator's work is worthily done, and that, in a loving and appreciative "introductory essay," a brief but interesting memoir of the author is given.

"Old Merry's Annual" is the volume of *Merry and Wise* for 1867, now a thoroughly established favourite, that has fully satisfied its patrons in the past and promises equally well for the future. In the preface to this volume "Old Merry" tells his readers what he proposes to do for them in 1868, and we doubt not that the prospect of mirth, wisdom, amusement, and instruction will give pleasure in anticipation, and, when the year has run its course, will be found profitable in retrospect. It is scarcely necessary to mention that the magazine conducted by our "Merry and Wise" old friend contains short papers on attractive subjects, nice stories, and well-executed illustrations. Though a religious tone pervades the work, there is little of cant or the constant "preachment" with which young people are often so mercilessly bored. Even the "homily" of the editor partakes very little of the objectionable features of a sermon. In short, "wisdom" is always pleasantly qualified by "mirth," and a very happy compound is the result.

"Beeton's Boy's Annual" is a more pretentious as well as more bulky volume. It contains no less than 692 pages of letterpress, pictures, diagrams, &c., and includes something of almost everything. There are history, biography, romances, tales, poems, puzzles, essays on science and arts, hints on handicrafts, and we know not what besides. One feature will particularly interest those for whom this "Annual" is intended, and that is the plate of portraits, with biographies of the contributors to the *Boy's Own Magazine*, from the pages of which the "Annual" has been mainly compiled, we believe. It might have been as well, perhaps, had the editor omitted his own portrait and biography; but that is a matter of taste. This "Annual" is a capital book for boys.

"The Children's Hour" annual is the yearly volume of the children's magazine of the same name, and is filled with instructive and improving stories, essays, poems, &c., and seems well conducted. The engraving we have reproduced from its pages illustrates a story called "Lizzie Willis, and what she learned from the Fairy Queen of Dreamland."

Lizzie is an idle little puss, who hates sewing, housework, weeding the garden—in fact, everything in the shape of work. Her widowed mother, who is poor, is utterly at a loss what to do with the girl, and, as a last resource, sends her to gather sticks in the "Duke's Wood." Here Lizzie occupies herself in gathering flowers instead of firewood, and at last, tired and weary, lies down on a mossy bank and falls asleep. After a while she is awakened by the Queen of Dreamland, who rates her soundly for her idleness, gives her much good counsel, and at last grants a wish she expresses. But for full details of all this, and what came of Lizzie having had her desire gratified, we must refer our young readers to the book itself. It will well repay perusal.

"The Boy's Own Book" is a new and revised edition of an old acquaintance, which, so far as we can see, has but one fault, and that is, that the print is so small. But young eyes, perhaps, will not mind this, and will probably find ample compensation for the diminutive type in the quantity and variety of the contents of this neatly got-up volume.



"LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ANNET."—FROM ROBERTS'S ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH BALLADS.

admirable cartoon, the irresistible outline drawing, the droll quaintness of Bab, the humour of Mrs. Brown, and the real sense of Town Talk and Our Stall, we give a few minutes to the Double Acrostics. Being usually on subjects of the week, they may be made out, with a little patience; but here is a small volume, containing nearly 370 of such difficulties, without the slightest chronological hint. We have no time to test them all, but we have dipped in here and there with singular want of success. The book is for those who are really fond of puzzles.



"LIZZIE WILLIS AND THE QUEEN OF DREAMLAND."—FROM THE
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1867.

AMIDST THE ICE.

It is doubtful whether it might not be a good fashion for Christmas numbers to publish none but tropical stories and Oriental illustrations, as a seasonable variety for their readers during the chill nights of an English winter. At all events, it would be a change from the present custom of freezing the public in imagination, while they are shivering in the draught of every open door or ill-fitting window; and at the same time it would give great scope to the genius of graphic describers, who might really achieve a triumph by so influencing a constant subscriber as to impart warmth by the mere act of word-painting. The only question is, who is to begin? It is so dangerous to depart from acknowledged prescription that we are content to leave the suggestion to bolder enterprise, and for the present to illustrate a recent topic by depicting one of the dangers awaiting those bold explorers who are about to start on a fresh Arctic expedition.

We should have said three expeditions, for England, France, and Prussia are all preparing to send voyagers to the North Pole by different routes, and should the adventurers arrive so far without accident, they may meet at Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, or Behring's Straits.

Who is there that has not felt a terrible fascination in dwelling upon the accounts of those awful regions devoted to the silence and solitude of a world bound in iron frost, and has not shuddered as he thought of those pitiless blue-white crags overtopping the struggling ship, and blasting it with their still deathlike presence? Tales of shipwreck are less common now than they were fifty years ago, when "The Mariner's Chronicle" was deemed a fit present for a boy, and our fathers at home for the holidays sat reading by the firelight

how, in 1789, the Guardian sloop, with a crew of 123 persons, including twenty-five convicts, and bound for Botany Bay with stores for "the infant colony," was wrecked after leaving the Cape on an island of ice, to which the boats had been sent to collect the frozen lumps, in order to provide water for the cattle on board.

Then there was the Lady Hobart packet, which sailing for Halifax in June, 1803, and taking a prize in the shape of a French schooner on the Great Newfoundland bank, struck an ice island, the peak of which was twice the height of their masthead, and was so injured that the crew, with the passengers (amongst whom were several ladies) and the prisoners, were compelled to take to the boats, and after dreadful hardships were rescued by a schooner off Island Cove.

The naïveté with which these old stories were narrated is very refreshing in days when sensation reports are so common.

"While we were getting out the catter," says one commander, in his report, "I perceived John Tipper, one of the seamen, emptying a demi-jean (a bottle containing five gallons), which, upon inquiry, I found to be rum. He said he was emptying it for the purpose of filling it with water from the scuttle cask on the quarter-deck, which was the only fresh water that could be got at. This circumstance I relate as being so highly creditable to the character of a British sailor; and the water thus procured afterwards became our principal supply."

Bravo, John Tipper! Bravo, simple commander! Stay. Both have gone to their rest long ago, and the ice islands have melted perhaps and fresh ones have been formed, and new ships go down to the great deep to take the place of the Hobart packet, and, let us hope, to escape the dangers that encompass them amidst the ice.

JOSHUA THOMSON'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

BY K. S. MACQUOID.

PART I.

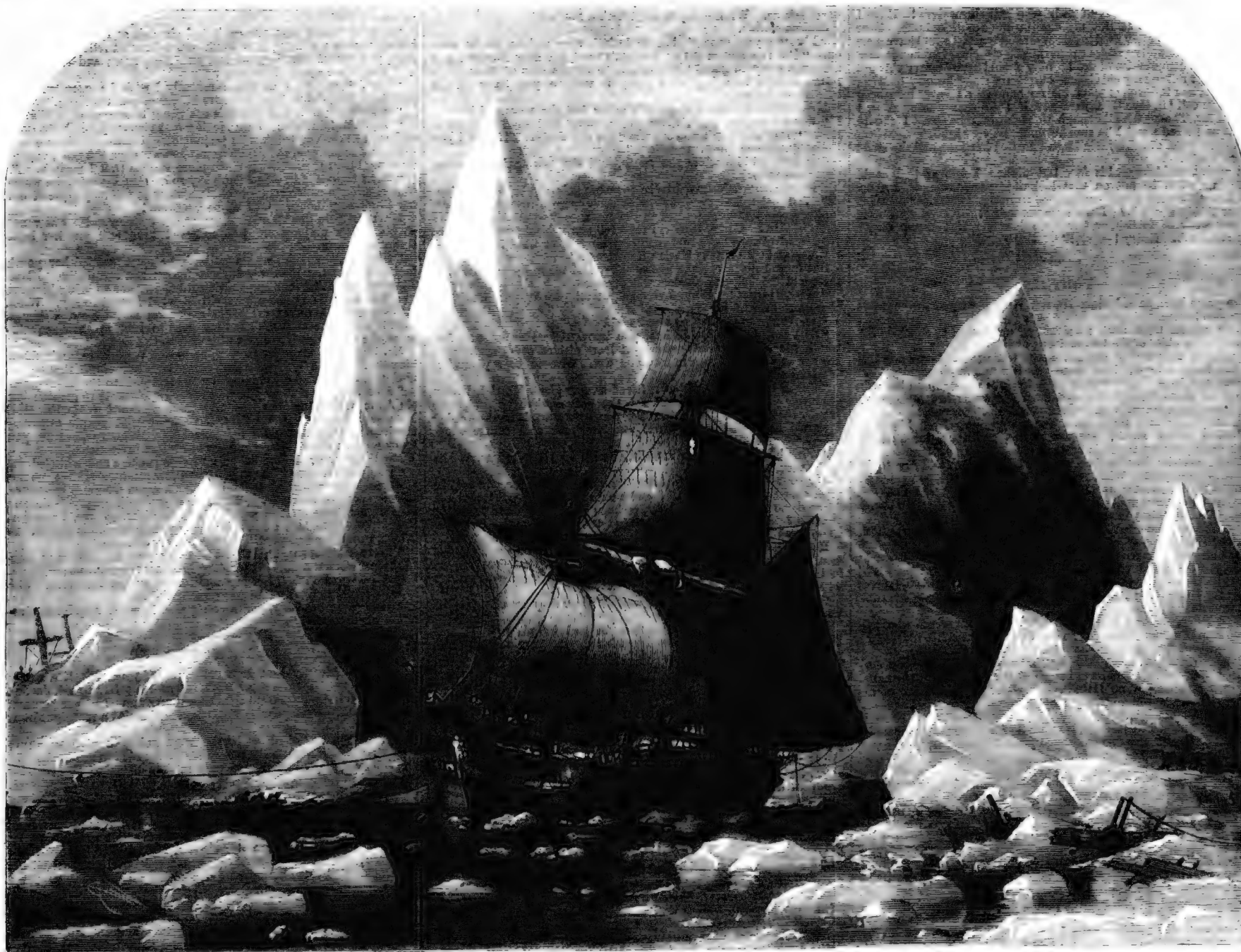
"I ONLY wish I had a pair of scales here, I would weigh both letters and choose whichever kicked the beam. I want the lightest, brightest life I can get; and yet heaviness, some sort of heaviness, is necessary too; what would life be without a heavy purse to smooth away its cares and provide its luxuries? I've said it, I can't live without luxury—I have had it for the last four years, and I am not going to give it up."

Miss Gray stretched out her hand and took two letters from a table beside her.

There was little luxury in her surroundings; a dingy, ill-furnished back bed-room, on the second floor of a London lodging-house; but her dress was elegant and costly, and her white, well-shaped hands looked as if they were not accustomed to the rough work of life.

Miss Gray was not handsome; there was too little colour both in her eyes and hair, and her pale brown eyelashes injured her expression. She had singularly good teeth, but her mouth was wide and thin lipped; her skin was fair and clear, but spoiled by freckles; and yet when she rose and began to pace the room with the letters in her hand, her perfect and well-developed form made the face for the time forgotten.

She was only twenty, and she had already the Juno-like presence of a woman five years older; the easy, graceful movement of every limb told the exquisite proportions of her figure.



ESCAPING FROM ICEBERGS.—(DRAWN BY E. WELDON.)

And she was quite aware of her own advantages, and was balancing how, as she paced thoughtfully up and down on the rough checked carpeting, whether so fine a person as hers, if seen in better society, might not procure her a more eligible offer of marriage than that of worthy Mr. Stephen Thomson.

Her father, four years before, had sprung from the condition of a hard-working attorney into sudden opulence; but this had now changed into utter ruin. He had just been detected in forgeries to a large extent, and had escaped legal punishment by leaving the country. Now that he was found out, people said his practice had always been sharp, and that he had always been fond of speculating with the money of others. It is wonderful how much truth one learns about one's neighbours so soon as they become unfortunate.

The shock had shattered Mrs. Gray's intellects. Loving and gentle-natured, she had looked up to her husband as the very soul of honour; he had been the rock on which she rested for advice and comfort in every doubt and difficulty, and now that the firm support was uprooted for ever, her mind drifted hither and thither unable to grasp or comprehend.

Her two daughters (there were no other children) were thus thrown on their own resources. As yet they had scarcely had time to decide on any plan of life; but this morning's post had, as we have seen, brought two letters to Harriet, and it is time to speak of their contents.

One was from her father's only rich relation—a cousin. He offered to provide for Mrs. Gray and her youngest daughter. To Harriet he proposed an engagement as governess in a nobleman's family in Wiltshire. She would be sure of kind treatment and a liberal salary. "And," Mr. Mount went on, "so much has been spent on your education and accomplishments, that you should be rejoiced to find such an opportunity of turning them to account."

Miss Gray flung this letter on the table, keeping its inclosure in her hand.

"I must read dear old Thomson's again." She seated herself and went through it, weighing every word. "What an old fool it is! Can I ever tolerate silliness in my husband? And I thought he was richer. He only offers to settle £400 a year on me. And then, suppose we quarrel, that good-looking brother of his may induce Stephen Thomson to will all the rest to him. Besides, if I make a money marriage, odious Mr. Mount will expect me to do something handsome—in presents, at least—towards mamma and Jane. Poor mamma! She used always to say she would rather see us both confirmed old maids, or poor men's wives, than married to husbands whom we could neither love nor sympathise with. But that is such old-fashioned nonsense. Money is everything now, and why should not I try for it as well as everybody else? But I have not tried. The old fellow has made me a bonâ-fide offer."

She sighed. Was it at the sacrifice of any youthful dreams of romance, or at the remembrance that she was now bereft of any sweet motherly council? If for the last, 't was like many other regrets—imaginary, for Miss Gray had never in her life consulted her mother about anything more important than the fit of a dress.

She took up the inclosure of Mr. Mount's letter.

"Lady Wakenham would be glad to avail herself of his young cousin's talents. The salary would be £150 a year. Lord Wakenham was so frequently absent from home that Lady Wakenham felt sure, from Mr. Mount's account, she should find Miss Gray a real acquisition in the way of companionship," &c.

Harriet drew a long breath.

"Often away! Ah! in that case, they don't receive while they are in the country, and I and my pupils should probably be left shut up there when they go to town. Merci, M^{me}. la Comtesse, I might just as well live with poor mamma, except for the money. Certainly, a poor governess is not expected to make presents, and I could dress well on £150 a year; but where's the use of dress if no one sees you and you are not a free agent?"

She began to walk up and down the room again, playing nervously with her watch-chain.

"What things people say of girls who sell themselves! Have I not said them myself? But my case is an exceptional one. Four years ago, before I grew used to all these necessities, I could have gone governessing as well as anyone; now," she clenched her hands desperately, "I cannot—I will not! Why should I not marry this old man? He is not so very old either—only sixty; and he may be wiser when he is less in love. I care for no one else; I never have been what girls call 'in love.' I dare say, if I bring my mind to it, I can like Mr. Thomson well enough to make him happy. I should do just as I liked; and I'm sure he would be very kind."

An expression of intolerable disgust crossed her face, and she stood suddenly still.

"I wish I could forget his face last night. I felt as if I could strike him when he put on that look of idiotic fondness. I knew then that this letter would come in the morning. I wonder what his brother thinks about it? I wish they were not partners. He does not look weak or foolish, at any rate; however, if I marry one, I must rule both. Marry!—Pah!"

PART II.

Five years have passed since Harriet Gray pondered the contents of her two letters.

Three weeks from that perplexing morning she married Mr. Thomson, the elder of the two eminent merchants.

She looks thoroughly elegant now, sitting in her luxurious morning-room, where refined taste and comfort reign equally; but she does not look happy—there is a fretful expression on her thin lips and an angry light in her eyes, and she turns her head away from her companion with an impatient gesture.

Her brother-in-law, Mr. Joshua Thomson, got up from his chair and looked at his watch. He was a fine, handsome man, nearly fifteen years younger than his brother.

"Well, good-by, Harriet," he said; "I hope you will try to be patient and resigned. Why, my dear child, you have gone so well through much greater trouble than you might teach us all. Come, be a good girl and calm yourself before poor Stephen comes home. He has only you to look to for comfort, remember."

He took her hand affectionately, though in his heart he was both surprised and disappointed with his sister-in-law.

The house of Thomson Brothers had stopped payment—it would probably take years to restore it to its former position. But, although Joshua Thomson was a thorough man of business, he was a good Christian too; and Harriet's sullenness and want of submission shocked him.

"You know," he had been saying, "there are hundreds who will suffer more than we shall; yet no one can be blamed."

A disastrous fire had been the primary cause of this ruin.

"I wish I were a man," said Mrs. Thomson, with sneering emphasis. "This would never have happened if I had been at the helm. Poor dear Stephen! If he'd think less about me and more of his business, things would go straighter, I expect."

Joshua flushed slightly.

"We both attend to business, Harriet. So far as you are concerned, you are quite safe. No one can touch your £400 a year."

Mrs. Thomson looked more sullen.

"We cannot live on that."

"Many people live on less." He checked himself. After all, she was very young, and he had, perhaps, been harsh. "But of course there will be something more than that; and you know, Harriet, my dear, you are my only sister. What I can spare you I will."

The black cloud left Mrs. Thomson's face. She kissed him, thanking him warmly.

"Still, dear Joshua,"—she kept his hand, petting it between both hers—"you must let me say that it is very hard to be reduced twice in one's life from affluence to poverty."

He only made a general answer, and then left her.

"So far as she is concerned," he said to himself, as he walked back to his counting-house, "the lesson may be beneficial: it may teach her to be less extravagant. She is a very beautiful woman, and she dresses perfectly; but, faultless as she is in other ways, I

am afraid she spends too much money on herself. Poor Harriet! I ought not to be hard on her. Few young girls would have conducted themselves as well as she has done. What an excellent wife and sister she is! But the lesson may do good, and I must try and prevent her from feeling it too keenly."

Joshua Thomson's affection and his wisdom were at loggerheads. It had been so pleasing to be kissed and thanked during these past five years for the "loans," as she called them, with which he had supplied his sister-in-law, that he was sometimes blind to the fact that Mrs. Thomson's allowance ought to have been quite sufficient for her position in life.

But, then, both he and Stephen took such pride in her, and always seemed to consider that she must be the best and most fashionably dressed woman in the society into which she dragged them, that they were, he thought, as much to blame as the "poor child" herself.

Time passed on, and affairs mended with the house of Thomson Brothers; but, as society must be given up for the present, Mrs. Thomson acceded to her husband's wish that they should rent a villa a little way from London.

"Joshua saw one, yesterday, at Richmond, darling, which he says is just the thing to please you; and you know, Harriet, if he and you are both pleased, I am sure to like it."

Poor old Stephen looked with deprecating fondness at the beautiful woman he was so very proud to call his wife. It seemed to him criminal to have brought change of fortune on so glorious a creature.

"Of course," he said, when Joshua had driven her down to his charming little villa and she had expressed her approval of it, "it's very different to anything you have been used to, my dear; but you'll try to be happy there, I know."

And Mrs. Thomson, although she had not forgotten it, saw no use in telling her husband that till she was sixteen she had lived far more humbly and meanly than she was ever likely to live as the partner of his reduced fortunes.

PART III.

"I have a great mind to quarrel with you, Joshua," Mrs. Thomson said. "You never spend an evening here now. I believe you are always at Laburnum Villa."

Joshua looked a little disconcerted.

"Not quite the fact, my dear, because I'm here now."

"Ah! that won't do. You have not been here for a fortnight. Why, for the first month after you left us you came down at least twice a week. Do you know, I'm growing jealous."

She looked at him playfully, and yet with keen observation. Mr. Thomson was perplexed.

"Well, but, Harriet, the last evening I spent here you and your new friend, Mr. Montague, sang and played together so incessantly that I found myself rather in the way."

He did not speak naturally; it was as if he tried to mention carelessly that which he had very much at heart. Mrs. Thomson laughed, but she flushed too.

"Oh! that is it, is it? You are jealous of Mr. Montague. What an excellent joke! I really must tell Stephen you object to his favourite. Never mind, you dear old Joshua. Come again soon, and you shan't find him, I promise you. He only comes to play cribbage with Stephen, you know. My dear old man says he cannot see why he should not have his special neighbour too. He does not take to the Robertsons as you and I do."

"I thought Stephen always went to sleep in the evening, Harriet?"

"He used to," she said, quickly; "but Mr. Montague has quite cured him; they sit talking and smoking together long after I am gone to bed. Stephen said yesterday that he wished Montague would give up his house and share ours, as you used to before you took that little place at Brixton. Ah! Joshua, I wish you had never left us. What can you want with a house?"

Joshua smiled.

"I'll tell you soon," but he looked very serious as he went on. "Put this notion out of Stephen's head, my dear Harriet; you are much too young and too attractive to have a man of Montague's stamp always lounging after you; it will do you harm in the opinion of others."

Mrs. Thomson turned white with anger, but she concealed it.

"You are a dear, good, thoughtful fellow," and she smiled up at him. "But why don't you come and see me, Joshua? if I had you I should not care for other society."

She watched him while she spoke, and she saw again the same disconcerted look.

"Do you know, Joshua, I believe you are going to be married."

"Well"—he hesitated, but with such a smile that she started, for her guess had been formed on the instant—"would there be any harm in that? Come, Harriet, I must tell you. Marian said not just yet; but I always have told you everything, have I not?"

"Marian! Then it is Marian Robertson?"

She burst into tears; she was so angry and taken by surprise that she could not help it. Joshua was annoyed.

"Why, Harriet! Why, I thought, of all people, you would be pleased to hear of my happiness."

Mrs. Thomson tried to recover herself.

"So I am, dear; but, Joshua, you know sisters never can feel wholly glad to lose their brothers—at least sisters who have such a brother as you have been to me; you won't care to be my adviser or friend any longer."

"I shall be just as much your friend as ever; but, Harriet, I have often told you lately that Stephen is the only adviser you ought to have. Besides, really, I don't think you ever consult me seriously; I should have said you generally follow your own course about things."

Joshua had reason to feel dissatisfied with his sister-in-law, and he spoke very gravely indeed.

She took no notice of his changed manner. "I hope you will be very, very happy, dear. Shall I send a note round to Marian, and ask her to come in this evening? Or, perhaps, you will go and fetch her yourself? I do so long to see her, and she is always engaged now when I ask her to walk out with me or to spend the evening here."

He was puzzled. He wanted to speak plainly, and yet he felt it would be wiser to refrain. Harriet was so quick that the hint he had already given might be sufficient to check any further intimacy with Mr. Montague.

"No; not this evening, thank you. I know they are all engaged. I will bring Marian to-morrow, if I can."

He went away much sooner than he had intended. He and Harriet would be better apart for a few days. Poor thing! She was very fond of him, and he felt a tinge of self-reproach. Since he had known Marian and her mother he seemed to himself to have become very rigid in his notions about women; and if it were he who had changed, and not Harriet, his present hard judgment of her was scarcely just. His sister-in-law sat still where he had left her. She did not give way to the anger she had so hardly repressed before him. She wanted to think; to discover, if she could, who had been alienating Joshua from her.

"It cannot be Marian. She is a poor little creature, without any manner at all; but I don't think her artful. She is too much of an innocent to take such a notion into her head." She sat thinking again, and then she gave a rapid guess. "I see who it is now: it's Mrs. Robertson. Old fool! I suppose no man ever cared to look at her except her husband; and so she must needs see immorality in my friendship for the only companionable being in the neighbourhood. I begin to hate society and all its petty, irritating laws and restrictions. I have gone on as long as I can without sympathy. Poor Joshua was better than none; but if I am to be condemned to as bad as solitary imprisonment with Stephen, I shall do something much worse than finding enjoyment in Montague's society. I know I shall. So childish, too! I suppose, because that idiotic woman prefers female friends, she would condemn me to female sympathy for life. I hate women; with their small, contracted views and petty carping at each other,

how can they comprehend or enter into my larger notions? Mind what you are at, Mrs. Robertson. If you continue to poison Joshua's mind against me, he shall never marry your daughter."

She was in a dumb, ungracious mood when her husband came home to dinner. Mr. Thomson was slow-witted, and it was not till he had asked his wife three times whether she were not overjoyed at the prospect of Joshua's happiness that he began to connect her silence with the day's news.

"It was so kind of Joshua to meet me on purpose to tell me himself. As you know it, he said I ought to know it too."

They were walking round the garden together after dinner. He looked at his wife when no answer came from her, and her face flushed his awakening.

"Why, Harriet, my dear, are you displeased about Joshua's business?"

"I never said so."

"Ah! but I'm not quite such a noodle as not to see. Well, I suppose it's natural to all women to like to be first fiddles; but surely you ain't afraid that any smart young bride can ever put your nose out of joint?"

"I'm not afraid of anything; for myself, I should rejoice in seeing Joshua happily married; but I can't fancy that this girl is likely to suit him."

Mr. Thomson usually followed his wife's guiding opinions as the vane does the wind; but he was strongly attached to his brother, and this was the first time that anything like discussion had arisen about him.

"Well," he said, "I don't know. She's got a very pretty face and a trifle of money; and, besides, Joshua's old friendship for the father makes the match promising, I think."

"Oh, Stephen! I never knew till now that you admired dolls; and as for money, I could not have believed that you would consider that an acquisition in a wife."

Mrs. Thomson looked so tenderly reproachful that her doating husband felt quite criminal. He took her face between both his huge hands and kissed her forehead.

"My darling, you are right. You're always right. I was not speaking what I think myself just then so much as what the world thinks; but, come Harriet, it is to be; and, after all, Joshua's the best judge of what suits him. Make the best of her. I've no doubt you'll improve her wonderfully. I can't have my pet lose her spirits because there's going to be a wedding in the family."

Mrs. Thomson made no answer, and they walked on a little way in silence.

"I say"—Stephen hovered like a moth round the dangerous subject—"who's to say they mayn't be luckier than ourselves in the way of family? What a rare uncle I shall make, shan't I, Harriet?"

His broad, unmeaning face smiled all over, and he rubbed his hands heartily at this lucky idea. She turned away to hide her disgust; it was worse than the marriage even. What possible claim could she retain on a man with four or five children?

"You seem determined to be satisfied, so we'll not talk any more about it. All I mean is, that Joshua has done very well without a wife; and now, just because he finds an old school-fellow by chance, it does seem absurd that he should be in such a hurry to marry one of his daughters. If I tell you really what I think, I am not surprised Mrs. Robertson has not honoured me with much of her company; for I read people quickly, and those proper, quiet, prudish women are always matchmakers."

At exactly the same time on the previous day the following conversation had passed in the drawing-room of Laburnum Villa.

Mrs. Robertson objected strongly to disparity of years in man and wife; and, although Marian was twenty-six, she considered she had sacrificed herself in accepting Joshua Thomson. He had told her on his last visit that he wished an early day fixed for the marriage, and she had just repeated his request to her husband.

"And you know, John, that, even if it is to be, there can be no reason for such haste."

"I'm sorry, my dear, you can't feel about it as I do. If you had known him as a schoolboy, a frank, warm-hearted fellow, as true as steel, you would feel sure of Marian's happiness; and as to time, why should we stand in the way?"

"Well, I believe I do like him, only I wish he were ten years younger; but, John, I can't endure Mrs. Stephen Thomson."

"Mrs. Thomson! But Marian's not going to marry her, is she?"

"Oh, John! do listen. I am much too anxious to joke. Now, don't smile. I know you think I'm prejudiced—because she sings comic songs and uses her eyes in such a strange way when she talks to gentlemen; but it is something much more serious that I mean now."

"More serious still—you don't say so? Can anything be worse than singing a comic song or telling a story in the racy style of our handsome neighbour? Oh! women, women!"

Mr. Robertson got up and walked to the window. He was vexed at his wife's prejudices. She followed him, and put her hand through his arm.

"I believe," she said, with a smile that almost recalled her youth to her husband, "that a sufficient reason for my dislike to Mrs. Thomson might be found in the discord she seems to bring between us; but there is nothing personal in what I want to say. When first she came here several ladies called on her. Now, although from her own showing she has tried hard to keep up their acquaintance, we are the only women who visit at the Lodge."

Mr. Robertson made no answer; he looked very grave, and rubbed his chin thoughtfully. Like a flash came the remembrance that he had made a similar remark to himself on his last visit to the Thomsons.

"And, John, you know I never encourage servants to gossip; but old Anne said to me the last time Marian drank tea with Mrs. Thomson, that she thought I ought to know that people talk very much about that next-door neighbour, Mr. Montague. Now you know why I refused Mrs. Thomson's two last invitations."

Mr. Robertson put both his hands in his pockets and whistled.

"Hang it, my dear!" he said, after a few minutes' silence, "after all, these are surmises. It is hard to take away a woman's character on the report of servants. Why don't you talk openly to Joshua himself, and hear what he says? Let him speak to Mrs. Thomson. Even if she is foolish, I don't think so young a woman should be shunned by her own sex without a word of warning."

"You are always right, John. I believe you men are more merciful than women are. I'll speak to Joshua the next time he comes. Though mind, I don't think he could influence Mrs. Thomson. She has more wit than all of us put together."

Joshua came next day, and we have seen how he acquitted himself of his commission.

PART IV.

"I say, Harriet, my dear, do try and put off your visit, if it's only for a few days. I must say I think it's scarcely fair to ask Joshua to stop his wedding a second time on our account. He says he must be married before the year is out, and there is not a fortnight of it left."

Mrs. Thomson looked as if she were going to give an angry answer; but in a minute she turned a smiling face to her husband.

"You poor dear Stephen, you were in such haste to get married yourself, you fancy every one must be as much in love as you were. I'm sure Marian seems as pleased and contented as need be. Besides, I do not see that it was any fault of ours that caused the first delay. You did not break your own leg on purpose. They would have been unfeeling, I think, to get married while you lay on a sick-bed."

"All the same, my pet, I'll not trust my neck to your driving any more; you're far too random for me. Montague shall be my coachman. But, now, be a good girl, and put off this visit, to please me."

He put his arm round her, but she turned away.

"I am surprised at you, Stephen. When my sister is seriously ill, you ask me to give up the positive duty of nursing her to join in the festivities of a wedding!" Mrs. Thomson looked horror-stricken.

"I—I say, Harriet"—Mr. Thomson spoke in a very subdued

voice—"look here, I suppose the wedding could not happen without you, could it, my pet? Everything would go wrong, wouldn't it?"

She turned quickly, and gave him a searching look. No; it was plainly his own suggestion.

"I suppose Mrs. Robertson would be very glad of my absence, but I think Joshua would dislike it. As to that woman, do you know, Stephen, that she hates the sight of me, just because I have the best of the two brothers?"

Mr. Thomson became radiant in a moment. His wife was not often so complimentary.

"Is that the reason why she never comes here? Robertson told me, when I spoke about it, that they none of them liked Montague."

Mrs. Thomson had changed colour while her husband spoke, but she was ashy pale when he looked at her for a reply.

"Indeed," she said, with sneering emphasis, "rather an impertinent remark to make to you of your own particular friend." She paused, and then, as a new light seemed to break on her, she went on rapidly, "I see something now which explains a good deal to me. Do you remember what a violent fancy those girls took to me at first; they were in and out here all day. Well, at that time, your friend was a little attentive to Jane Robertson. I believe that match-making woman thought she had disposed of both her girls, and now they are trying to pique him and draw him on by avoidance. What creatures women are! Now I must run away and dress. Joshua will dine here, you know, on his way to Laburnum Villa."

Mrs. Thomson had never looked better in her life than she did now, as she sat awaiting the arrival of her brother-in-law. For the last few weeks she had been growing day by day more haggard, and the arrival of the post seemed to be an anxiety to her. She had been up to the counting-house three times to see Joshua, and had tried to make an opportunity of speaking privately to him when he came to Richmond. But, either by accident or design, he had always disappointed her hopes. This evening she had resolved he should not escape. She had bade them not serve dinner until she rang and ordered it, and she had specially requested her husband not to appear until she sent for him.

"This is my last evening with Joshua, dear, and there are just one or two useful bits of advice I wish to give him which are best mentioned between ourselves."

She need not have given any reasons to poor doating Stephen, but she seemed impelled not to leave a shadow of chance of any interruption to the tête-à-tête she so longed for. Was he going to balk her? It was not but ten minutes to the dinner hour, and still he had not arrived. A flush came into her face, and she pressed her lips closely together.

"He has not answered my letter. He suspects that I want to get a few words alone with him, and he is trying to disappoint me this way. You are no match for me, my dear Joshua. I am strung up to-night as I never was before; and yet I scarcely know why I should doubt his willingness to help me. The last time I asked him—he was just engaged then—he said he was so short of money that it would be out of the question. Stephen said yesterday that Joshua had made arrangements to draw out of the business all the money his uncle had left him for his marriage expenses. It will be hard indeed if I don't get some of this. Why should I, who have devoted five years of my life to him and his brother, be sacrificed for a girl he has not known as many months? What a blind fool I was not to leave this neighbourhood when I heard those people were old friends of his!"

Something seemed to sting her. She turned, and paced the room more rapidly than ever.

"I have not neglected Joshua; why should I think anything so absurd? If he leaves off coming here and finds no pleasure in talking to me, am I to close the door against everyone else? Absurd! I should think so, indeed. I cannot live alone in this miserable, dreary place; I must have some one who feels for and sympathises with my hard, changed lot. And then Joshua dared to say, 'your husband is your best adviser.' How the light-grey eyes gleamed as she mimicked to herself Joshua's voice and manner! As well tell the nurse to consult and lean on the baby she is teaching to walk; it cannot be right to keep a soul full of superior intelligence chained to an insensible log—or worse, to a living being scarcely removed from an idiot. If I cannot get this money from Joshua, I am a ruined woman. I could not ask Stephen; besides I know he could not help me. Joshua must help me; he has been saving for years, and if he had never seen Marian Robertson it would all have been mine by right."

There came a longer pause than before. She heard the swing of the gate, and her last private interview with Joshua flashed into remembrance.

"I must, indeed, have lost my wits if this marriage is allowed to go on. Why, if Marian and her family have dared to prejudice him against me beforehand, what will happen afterwards? Perhaps Mrs. Joshua Thomson may not consider it correct to visit her sister-in-law, just as if she is marrying for love, and as if she won't find marriage the weary thing I find it."

Stephen Thomson was hungry and wanted his dinner. That first quarter of an hour in his wife's morning-room had been an intolerable penance. He felt a little cross when the French clock told him a second quarter had begun and still no summons. Had Joshua come, he wondered. The boudoir was at the back of the house, and Harriet had given him a newspaper and told him not to come down stairs till he was wanted.

"Rather hard, I must say, considering Joshua's my own brother, and that I am so soon going to lose him; uncommonly hard."

The third quarter struck. His mouth watered for his dinner. He must go down stairs and find out how much longer he should have to wait. He heard earnest talk in the drawing-room as he passed. He would give them ten minutes longer, and then he would go in and disturb them. Had he known the purport of that talk he would at once have walked in; but he stood under the hall lamp, playing with his wife's dog—a gift from Mr. Montague.

It was Joshua's voice that his brother had heard. His face was flushed, and there was a mixture of pain and vexation in its expression.

"If you could know how much it hurts me to say no, you would yield to my advice, Harriet. Simply and honestly, I cannot give you the sum you ask. I have not got it; nor—" He hesitated, and then went on, frankly, "You are my sister, and I will be quite open with you; if I had it, I should not feel justified in giving it to you. I believe I have been wrong ever to connive at your keeping your debts from your husband, for that is what this comes to; but, as a married man almost, I see this in a stronger light than I ever did before."

She had been self-controlled; but now anger conquered.

"You mean that you see things through other's eyes—not your own. I ought to have remembered this before I asked you. I forgot you were no longer a free agent, with a will of your own."

She could not stifle him into anger, he was so full of happiness and love, just then. He got up from his chair and took her hand. "My poor, dear Harriet, you are vexed with me for disappointing you. Some day, when you have told all your troubles to your good husband, you will thank me for this refusal."

She drew her hand away and burst into tears. He hoped she was softened, and he went on.

"This is probably the last time you and I shall ever talk secrets"—he smiled, and tried to speak less seriously—"and I want to say one little word, which, perhaps, I should have said before. Stephen would love you just as well if you dressed less expensively, and—and I think you would consult your own self-respect if you only dressed to please him."

"I don't know what you mean." She left off crying abruptly. Joshua was too much embarrassed with his subject to look at her, or the gleam in her eyes might have startled him.

"I have gone so far," he said, in a determined voice, for he had heard her talked of lightly only that morning, and he had resolved to speak to his brother about Mr. Montague's constant visits, "that I must say something more. It is not wise or right that you should encourage this constant visiting from one person, a younger, handsomer man than your husband. Hitherto I have not thought

it right to interfere between man and wife, but I really believe I ought to have spoken to Stephen."

If he could have seen how her lip curled, and how her handsome form dilated almost into majesty as he spoke! Truly she looked the personification of injured virtue. Before she could answer, the door opened and her husband came in.

"Come, I say, are you two quarrelling about the wedding? You mustn't be too hard on her, Josh. But she really ought to go to her sister."

There was an awkward silence. Mrs. Thomson broke it by ringing the bell for dinner, and then she turned to her husband.

"You poor, starved old dear, you must be ready to eat us up. No. I have not told Joshua yet. I left you to do it; you have a clever way of putting those things, you know," she half-whispered.

Joshua was electrified. He could not believe she was the agitated, angry woman of five minutes ago. Was Mrs. Robertson right, and was Harriet artful and unprincipled? Let what would happen, he should speak to Stephen and show him the evil report he was bringing on his wife by his persistence in this intimacy with Montague. Mrs. Thomson turned quickly and looked at him, and she read his determination in his face.

During dinner, Stephen volunteered an explanation of his wife's intended absence from the wedding. Joshua was sorry; but he made no proposal to await her return—in fact, he seemed to have very little to say at all. Mrs. Thomson marked everything, but she gave no sign of vexation—she surpassed herself in animation. She was so cordial and hearty in her congratulations to Joshua when Stephen wished him joy after dinner, that his heart smote him for his hard judgment.

The brothers did not sit very long together after Mrs. Thomson left them, and Joshua did not speak about Mr. Montague. He went away early—so early that Mrs. Thomson could hardly persuade him to wait for coffee. He did wait, however; and after he had drunk the cup she handed him herself, as if to make up their quarrel, he whispered that he knew she would take his advice, and that then she would be "famous friends with Marian."

Stephen saw him to the gate, and his wife followed closely.

"Good-by, old fellow; God bless you! I suppose I shall meet you next at Harriet's on Thursday. Tell Marian I shall look up an old shoe of Charlie's to throw after her. If she makes as good a wife as my pet, you will be lucky, Josh."

Mrs. Thomson put her hand on her husband's arm. "I shall call on him at Brixton to-morrow on my way to the station. I should like to see the new furniture."

Joshua walked out towards Laburnum Villa. His brother's words had again disturbed him. He believed he ought to see him and give him a word of warning—it would be easy to do it without in any way criminating Harriet. He could not think of her as Mrs. Robertson did. She was young—vain, perhaps; but there were many allowances to be made for her; and then he caught a glimpse of Marian watching for him, and he forgot all but her.

"Do you know, Joshua," she said—they were walking up to the house, for though the weather was mild for the time of year, it was too cold even for lovers to linger in the garden—"I am glad that Mrs. Thomson does not wish to be present. Mamma dislikes her so very much that I think it is better."

"Poor Harriet! You must let me say, my darling, that your mother is prejudiced on this subject. You can't imagine what a kind-hearted creature my sister-in-law is. Now, to-day, anxious as she is about her sister and other things, she did not forget to tell me she had arranged about a trusty person to take charge of our house till we came back."

"That is very kind; but I wish mamma had not persuaded you to send your servants away; you will be so uncomfortable for the next few days."

"Not a bit of it; Harriet's old woman is to go there to-night, and she no doubt will do the little I want satisfactorily."

And then the talk became less matter-of-fact, and often they did not talk at all, as they sat alone in the drawing-room, with hearts full of the great happiness before them.

"I can scarcely believe in it yet," said Marian; "sometimes I think it never can be that such a life is reserved for me."

"And I am always longing that I were worthier of you; that I were younger and more deserving."

She held up her sweet face to be kissed.

"Are you ill, Joshua? Your lips are cold, and your hand"—she clasped it in both hers—"is like death."

"I have a sick headache," he said. "I have gone through a good deal of harass to-day. Ah, Marian! soon I shall have no vexations; you will make everything smooth and sweet to me."

But when Mrs. Robertson came in to make tea his headache grew so much worse that he decided to return home earlier than usual. This was Friday; Monday would be Christmas Day; and the marriage was to take place on the following Thursday. He told Marian, as he said "Good-by," that he thought he should only be able to see her once more in her home before he took her to himself; but, at all events, he should spend Christmas Day with her.

PART V.

Mrs. Thomson glided noiselessly about the room, arranging bottles and glasses on a little side table. Then she glanced in between the bed-curtains to see if there were any movement. Her brother-in-law lay there still and silent, as he had lain for some hours past. She moved quietly into the adjoining room. A woman sat there in an easy-chair, sound asleep, and Mrs. Thomson shook her roughly. The woman started, and turned a wrinkled, half-imbecile face towards her.

"Lor'-a-mercy, Madam Thomson, how you do scare 'un."

"Be quiet, Matthews. I want you to try and recollect exactly who has seen Mr. Joshua."

"How should he see any folk at all? I told 'ee the same this mornin', when 'ee came first. Last night, as soon as he came in; he went up stairs to bed—in the night I heard 'im calling of me but I be too full of rheumatics to be getting up all times in a night, so I bided quiet, and, after a bit, so did he."

"Well, but this morning?"

"I was a-going to tell 'ee when he roused up just now, and you bid me give him the physic; and now I dunno if I can mind it again."

"Take your time," said Mrs. Thomson, forcing a smile over the hard contracted look her face wore. "You were saying, you know, that he rang early this morning, and when you went to him you found he had been very ill all night, and wanted to see a doctor; have you been for any one?" She asked the question carelessly, for the old woman had gathered her wits, and was watching her with keen interest.

"I telled ye I went to Dr. Fransit, a little way up the road; he had been out all night, the maid said, with some 'un, but she'd send him when he comed in. He'll be here soon, may be."

"And when you came back, did Mr. Joshua say anything to you?"

"You asked me that afore," said the woman, doggedly; "he said a many things. I tell 'ee I don't mind 'em all."

Mrs. Thomson put her hand in her pocket and held out a sovereign.

"You had better have some of your wages in advance, Matthews."

The crone grinned as she took the money.

"Let me see. He said I was to send for Miss Marian—he only wants her; and he said, too, if you was to come I was to shut the door in your face, or somethink o' that."

"Poor dear fellow!"—Mrs. Thomson's handkerchief hid her face from the old woman's prying gaze—"that shows how light-headed he was. I must tell this Dr. Fransit all the symptoms; it is most important he should know. Of course, I can do nothing but just give him a little composing medicine to bring on sleep after these fearful spasms. I suppose you can guess what's the matter with him, Matthews?"

"Not I, Madam Thomson; I leaves that to you."

Mrs. Thomson's face twitched, but she seemed not to notice the woman's half-insolent manner.

"I fancied you told me, when you were in gaol at Liverpool, that there was a case of Asiatic cholera there?"

The woman crouched down in a heap in her chair.

"Why need ye bring by-gones agin me? I'm keepin' my word to you; why can't ye do the same? You said you'd make me look respectable and find me a place, and I swore to you on oath that if you did me such a turn as that I'd never say you nay, but allers do your bidding; but let by-gones be by-gones, Madam Thomson."

The street bell startled them. Mrs. Thomson hesitated for a few seconds.

"I'll answer it, Matthews; you stay here. It is the doctor, no doubt."

Mrs. Thomson ran down stairs, but the bell rang again before she could open the street door. She found a young, foolish-faced man standing there. He was in an important state of impatience.

"Now, my good lady, how is the patient? Perhaps you will have the goodness to let me see for myself, for my time is of the utmost value."

He had set up in business only a few months, and this was about his fourth patient. Mrs. Thomson kept herself dexterously between him and the foot of the stairs.

"Mr. Thomson is sound asleep now," she said. "You can look at him, of course; but I think, perhaps, you will not choose him to be awakened when I have detailed the symptoms."

The doctor's face grew frightened and still more foolish as she related them.

"God bless my soul!" he said. "I suppose you have a notion what this is? As clear a case of Asiatic cholera as I ever met with in the course of my practice. Only it is such an extraordinary thing at this time of year. You are quite right, my dear Madam, in wishing him not to be disturbed. I would not run such a risk—for him—on any account. I'll send you up some medicine at once, and some written directions how to proceed; and call again in the course of the day."

He rattled off a few precautionary measures, ordered that no one should be admitted to see the patient, and hurried away. Mrs. Thomson smiled to herself as she closed the door upon him.

"What a coward the man is! I never saw a doctor afraid of infection before."

She wrote a note to her husband telling him she had called on Joshua as she had proposed, and had found him so ill that she should stay and nurse him instead of going on to her sister's. "The doctor has just been here," she added, "and I fear there is little hope of recovery. He says it is Asiatic cholera. Will you let poor dear Marian know at once? What is our grief compared to hers?" Then she went out and found a boy, and directed him to her husband's counting-house. It was remarkable that, with her sharp powers of observation, Mrs. Thomson should have chosen so stupid-looking a messenger, especially as her directions were given in a confused, rambling way.

She looked terribly harassed when all was done—her eyes sunk back in her head, and there was a bright, hectic spot on each cheek.

The stupid messenger did not reach Mr. Thomson's counting-house till just as he was leaving it. Poor Stephen was overwhelmed; but he obeyed his wife's orders, and sent the sad news off to Marian before he hurried down to Brixton.

"I have just seen Stephen Thomson," Mr. Robertson said to his wife. "Mrs. Thomson would not let him run the risk of staying all night at Brixton, and she thought it might comfort our poor darling to have news again this evening. Poor child! she met me at the gate as I came in, imploring me more beseechingly than ever to let her go over and nurse Joshua."

"We cannot let her run such a risk, though she must think us very cruel;" and poor Mrs. Robertson burst into tears.

"I am more decided since I've seen Thomson. He says there must be truth in the risk of infection, for the doctor himself dreads it. I told Thomson, if I were him I should go over the first thing in the morning, and then, if the poor fellow's no better, I should go back to London and fetch Dr. Brown."

"Did you tell Marian this?"

"Yes; but she's not herself. She seems to think it may not be cholera at all."

"How late it is," said Mrs. Robertson; "nearly eleven o'clock! You have been in and out all the evening watching for Mr. Thomson. You must be quite tired, John."

But still they sat and talked about their poor dear child's misery.

"I must say one thing, John: I cannot help admiring Mrs. Thomson's courage and devotion. But for her, Joshua would be left to a hired nurse."

The door opened, and Marian came in quietly.

"Not in bed, my dear, dear child? I saw you safe in your room more than an hour ago."

"I cannot sleep, indeed I cannot, unless you say I may go to him to-morrow."

She spoke very calmly, but she twisted her hands together as she looked from one parent to the other. Her father shaded his eyes with his hand; but her mother rose and put her arm round Marian. "Come away, my poor darling; we shall have a better account to-morrow; and then, if the London doctor says there is no risk, you shall go. Now you will sleep, darling?"

Marian made no answer. She let her mother lead her to her room, and when she bade her good night, urged no further appeal. She had determined to act for herself. Though usually shy, and inclined to lean on the judgment of others, she now felt full of self-reliance. She had never left home alone; but now, as she sat in the cold winter morning watching for daylight, she felt she had courage and strength to travel across Europe.

How slowly time passed—seven o'clock was so long in coming.

The railway station was about half a mile off. She knew that a train arrived there at half-past seven o'clock; surely there would be flies to meet it, and she could hire one to carry her to Brixton. The servants had been up late the night before with Christmas preparations—there was no fear of awakening them. At last the time came, and she crept softly down stairs; how freely she breathed when she had passed the garden gate and found herself on the crisp, frosty road leading to the station! It was bitterly cold in this grey twilight, but Marian did not feel it. There was a good deal of bustle at the station. Hampers arriving and departing; hares and pheasants were lying about among a motley assortment of luggage on the platform.

There were no flies as yet; but a good-natured porter advised Marian to sit by the fire in the waiting-room till one came up. How the bright faces of two schoolgirls who were waiting for the train which was to take them home for Christmas seemed to mock her!

"Here's a fly, Miss," said the porter, putting in his head.

It seems to Marian as if she had waited for hours. Will not the horse go faster? How long it is since she left home! Will Brixton never come? The dread which has been gathering round her heart all night has become agonising—the dread of Mrs. Thomson's presence beside Joshua's sick-bed.

Here is the road at last in which the house stands, and she stops the fly before it can drive up. There is some one on the doorstep. She shall get in without delay; it is the doctor's boy, he has a medicine-bottle in his hand. The door opened, and Marian shuddered at sight of the ugly, leering face that presented itself.

"The doctor's orders was not to let no one in but him and Mr. Thomson;" she would have shut the door, but Marian had her foot on the threshold.

"But I am Mr. Joshua Thomson's wife; I have a right to be here."

She pushed past Matthews, and was half way up stairs before the woman had recovered from her surprise.

"His wife! why, they say he's agoin' to be married," she said, looking after Marian with a mixture of fear and curiosity.

Marian paused when she reached the landing. She had been over the house once, but she did not remember which was his sleeping-room; she had a terror lest Mrs. Thomson would try and prevent her from seeing him.

Straight before her was a closed door; on the right was the staircase, and on the left two doors, one wide open showing a small bed-

room looking to the back, and the other just ajar. If she opened the wrong door she would rouse Mrs. Thomson; and yet it seemed to her that time was precious. She turned the handle softly of the door in front—it was fast. Suddenly she remembered that the best bed room was in front of the house, and that it communicated with a little dressing-room behind it which looked out on the garden at the side.

Her hand was on the lock of the half-open door, when a slight rustling made her start and listen—the sound of papers moved hurriedly, a drawer was shut and another opened, and then again the same rustling sound. Some one was within that room, and yet she must pass through it to reach Joshua. She roused herself with a sudden effort, pushed the door open, and walked forward. The white, terror-stricken face that met hers kept her tongue-tied.

Mrs. Thomson slid one hand back and closed a drawer of the davenport against which she leaned; and for a minute the two women stood looking at one another. Mrs. Thomson recovered herself before Marian did.

"Hush!" she said. "You must come down stairs with me." She felt no fear of the timid, gentle girl. All she had to do was to be composed and firm.

"He is not dead. I know he is not." Marian hurried to the door of communication, but Mrs. Thomson grasped her arm firmly.

"My dear child, he is dead to outer things. Consciousness has left him. I dare not let you incur such fearful risk for the sake of gazing on what is only a disfigured corpse."

Keeping her hold on Marian's arm, she moved towards the staircase. Then, indeed, she was surprised. Marian did not struggle. She made no attempt to loosen the almost painful grasp on her arm; but she fixed her soft, sweet eyes on the white, agitated face, as if she would read into Mrs. Thomson's very soul.

Harriet tried vainly to brave it out, to give back look for look. She could not. Her eyes drooped, her fingers loosened, and she shrank away from Marian as if she had accused her of some crime. For an instant—then, as the girl passed on into the darkened room, Mrs. Thomson sprang after her and caught her gown.

"Are you mad? Do you know that, coming as you do from the outer air into that poisoned atmosphere, you run into certain death?"

There was a tone of piercing eagerness in her voice, but she got no answer. Marian only shook herself free; then she laid aside her bonnet and cloak, and went up to the bedside.

From that moment, on this memorable Christmas Eve, Mr. Joshua Thomson recovered. It may have been that Marian arrived just at the crisis of his disorder; also much may have been due to the skill of the London doctor, whom Stephen brought down with him at mid-day. These are difficult points to determine. He recovered, and early in the New Year he married Marian Robertson; but neither his brother nor Mrs. Thomson came to the wedding.

The strange, sudden illness was soon forgotten by Joshua Thomson's acquaintances; but there were a few among his intimates who wondered that after the unselfish devotion his sister-in-law had manifested, there should have arisen such a complete estrangement between the two families, even to the dissolution of the firm of Thomson Brothers.

THE PHANTOM MONKS.

I SAW an abbey in a dream,
An abbey in a state of ruin;
It looked forlorn in the extreme;
The cold moonlight came steely-blue in.

I heard, far-off, the wolf-cub howl;
The night-wind shrieked among the arches;
Up in the ivy-tod the owl
Condoled with the poor shivering larches.

In spite of this, in spite of all
The inhospitable situation,
The table-dormant in the hall
Was draped, and spread with a collation.

And all the monks, the dark and fair,
The clerk, the thin, the large and little,
Were gathered round the table there,
Sub Jove to enjoy the victual.

Goblet and flagon did not clink—
No word was said—the monks were ghostly.
I scarcely could tell what to think,
The thoughts I had were cold ones mostly.

I saw the fare was Christmas fare,
And yet the vision did not warm me,
Though that the malvoisie was rare
A monk did by a wink inform me.

At last they all began to sing—
What not, the Angelus, the matins,
Domine labia,—anything,—
Strange old ecclesiastic latins;

And I awoke. The moon shone chill;
I had kicked off the bed apparel
In part. Beneath my window-sill
A band had just begun a carol.

And I remembered I had seen
A water-colour, à la Pugin,
That day, and said to Geraldine,
"My dear, why do you put gamboge in?"

It spoils your moonlight!" Geraldine
Was twelve, and Fanny was her sister;
I winked at Fanny (she's eighteen);
She frowned, but, for all that, I kissed her;

Called her "demure, a pensive nun"
(That's Milton); joked about eloping;
While, out of doors, the snow, in fun,
Shot avalanches from the coping.

Our mirth took a monastic bent,
As it befell, in methods various;
I did, in a charade, present
The part of a Refectorian.

All this explains a stupid dream,—
But Fan and I are not so stupid;
Her shoulder is as white as cream,
And I'm a vot'rist of St. Cupid.

I look upon monastic life
As so much noise, frowny folly;
I am—and Fan shall be my wife—
A Protestant as fierce as Whalley.

TRAVELLING AT CHRISTMAS EIGHTY YEARS AGO.

How is it that the old hearty enjoyment of Christmas, the old genial revelry and intense appreciation of all the material comforts that belong to the old-fashioned keeping of the great holiday, have been so diminished during the past century? Christmas is no longer Christmas. Nobody cares for the great roaring fire; the turkey and omelette are but a part of a half-neglected dinner, the wassail-bowl rests on some remote top shelf covered with dust, and the yule log

has given place to hot-water apparatus or the newest adaptation of gas warming.

The secret is easy to discover. In days when there were more physical difficulties to overcome, men could enjoy material comforts with greater zest. What can be more delightful than the red glow of a jolly Christmas fire shedding sparks from a great beech billet when a man has just come for a dozen miles or so through drifting snow outside a coach? Who would not appreciate the savoury odour of a roast goose and the spicy fragrance of rum punch when he sniffs both at the open door at which he has arrived through perils of flood and field? The mistake of our age is to interpret civilisation as meaning only increased means of temporal convenience, and it is because we think a little too much; think idly and selfishly of saving ourselves from fatigue and trifling disturbance, that we lose our enjoyment of common pleasures. Not that we would wish to go back to the times when the journey to spend Christmas meant a long and dreary ride in the stage-coach, or more humbly in the waggon, over deserted heaths and by uneven roads, the chances of being detained for a night in a snowdrift alternating with the probability of becoming the prey of highwaymen. We could not, if we would, go back to those times; and yet they were not so long ago. We are inclined to grumble at the "slow train" and the discomforts of "third class" when we are more than five hours going a hundred miles; but the grandfather of the Duke of Buckingham had an inn built for his accommodation at Winslow, because the journey from Stowe to London could not then be performed in one day. It was considered a great feat for the "Alton and Farnham machine," as the old lumbering coach of 1750 was called, to come to London (forty-seven miles) in about fourteen hours; and even the last mail coaches, on long stages, were proud (and justly proud) of an average of eight to nine miles an hour. The waggons, however, were still slower—slower and safer, as far as wheels and ruts were concerned. We can all remember how Roderick Random and Strap made the journey to London, and were several days on the road; but later than this the broad-wheeled waggon survived, until it was swept off the surface of the earth by railways and canals. This great lumbering wain, with its jolly team and tinkling bells, its clean, sheltering "tilt" and heavy load, was to be seen no more than fifty years ago on some of the high roads; but it has disappeared; and those who have made the journey by it in winter when the snow lay deep can scarcely regret that it is now classed with those "good old times" which never can return.

SILVERSAIL AND THE CARRIER-PIGEON.

BY W. B. RANDS.

I.

THE Princess rose hurriedly from her faldstool and dropped her embroidery-frame, because the carrier pigeon came that moment slanting through the casement with a billet tied round its neck. The bird wavered to and fro from exhaustion like a shot partridge over the stable, and then descended, panting, on an illuminated missal that lay open on the table of the beautiful lady.

Oh, how beautiful she is! As she stoops over the book to look at the panting bird I cannot see more than the oblique outline of her profile; but from the crown of her glittering head to her feet, as I see her, she is fair to see. Her bodice of blue velvet, lightly bordered with a choice white fur, sits close to her exquisite sides; round her neck is a golden chain; the room is bright with her hair, and sweet with her presence; she moves like soft-flowing water; she breathes with a gentle murmur on the neck of the fainting carrier-pigeon; there is nothing in all the earth more lovely than the Princess.

II.

Without the palace it is mid-autumn, and the sun is setting full in sight of the casement, at the edge of the sea, which, when the wind is high, sprinkles the casements with foam. At first it seems as if, from the dilating red globe of the sun as a centre, a broad, bright girdle of mounting colour was about to be drawn out, farther and farther towards the north, farther and farther towards the south, higher and higher towards the zenith, till it circled the sea with its arms of crimson and covered it over with a dome of fire. But the sun dips, the colour fades; from the north, and the south, and the zenith, and the under world, the glooms come stretching; silently, ceaselessly closing in; and the Princess, glancing up from the carrier-pigeon across the bay, perceives that the beacon-fire of the lighthouse is lit. The sounding sea-rollers multiply and lengthen: they take hands when they are close to the beach and then break hurriedly on the shingle: the tide is coming up in the dusk with an awful music.

But long before the sun has set the Princess has unbound the billet from the neck of the carrier-pigeon, and read it, and placed it next to her heart, where none can see it but the God who made her lovely, and none may follow it, even by a thought with a prayer in it, but Silversail. Now, the billet contained only three words, which were—"Beloved, I come!" and the Princess knew they were the words of Silversail.

III.

When the lamps were lit, and the beechwood logs began to glow between the andirons (for the evenings were cold), the Princess's own maiden, followed by a page, came into the room and saluted her. The Princess answered the salute so sweetly that even the page and the maid wondered; and then she sat down on the crimson faldstool to receive what the page had brought in. This was, in truth, a very large golden salver, almost too heavy for him to carry, especially when we add to the weight of the gold that of a great number of letters, sealed with heavy crests, all addressed to the Princess.

"How many are there this evening?" inquired the Princess.

"Six-and-thirty, Madam," said the maid.

"Well-a-day!" replied the beautiful Princess, and sat meditating. The page knelt on one knee at her feet, looking timidly and furtively up under his eyelashes, just as you or I might look up to heaven. Suddenly a movement of impatience on the part of the beautiful Princess dashed a long lock of her hair on to the page's shoulder. Now I do not think either you or I could have borne a touch of her lovely thrilling curls without experiencing a shock; and the effect upon the youthful page was such as to make him drop the golden salver and spill all the letters on to the carpet. The Princess started up with a low laugh, and the page now let down his other leg and knelt on both knees, with clasped hands, looking very much frightened at her. But the beautiful lady quickly removed his embarrassment, for she said,—

"How clever of you, child! You have anticipated my very thought. I will sit on that low ottoman there, and you shall range the letters in a circle on the floor, like a witch's pack of cards, all round me."

Of course, the page blushed, because he was mortified at being called a child by the lovely lady; but he did as he was told. And there the Princess sat on the low ottoman, with the six-and-thirty letters in a witch-ring on the carpet around her feet.

IV.

It was only a short time later in the evening when the Princess's father, having, of course, announced his intention beforehand in a proper manner by a goldstick, a silverstick (almost everything in the palace that was not gold was silver), a page, and a maid, paid the Princess a visit and demanded to know which of the six-and-thirty offers of marriage—for such, in truth, the letters were—she intended to accept.

In reply to this the Princess respectfully but firmly said,

"Neither, Sir."

"Why not?" said her father.

"Because they all come from persons of more or less objectionable character," said the Princess.

As the beautiful Princess had thus put her refusal upon moral grounds the King was much puzzled, since it would never have

done for it to go forth to the empire and the world that a Royal father desired his daughter to marry a person of objectionable character; besides, he was afraid of the press. But he suddenly happened to observe that none of the letters were opened.

"My dear," said the King, with some asperity, "how can you judge of the character of your six-and-thirty suitors if you have not opened and read their letters?"

He thought he had her there; but he was mistaken, for the Princess replied, with great promptitude,

"Dear Sir, from the thousands of love-letters"—here she blushed, not being accustomed to pronounce the word love—"from the thousands of love-letters that I have received, I have become a graphological expert."

"Hah?" said the King, interrogatively.

"Yes," replied the Princess, "I can tell character from the handwriting at a glance."

The consequence was that the King immediately withdrew, in much confusion.

V.

Not liking to be baffled, of course, the Monarch proceeded at once to the Royal Statistical Department, and demanded of a clerk to know how many love-letters for the Princess had been registered at the palace during the last half-year. Turning to the Princess Royal's Royal Correspondence Ledger, the clerk did a sum in addition, overlooked by another clerk for the sake of check, and after some time made answer,

"Nine thousand six hundred and fifty-nine."

"Sixty," said the other clerk. So then they added it up again, but they still made it different. One said fifty-nine and one said sixty.

"Let me add it up myself," said the King, in high displeasure. But when he had totted up the columns three separate times he was no nearer the mark, and his mental confusion was so extreme that the intellectual-looking deat or wrinkle between his eyes was for the moment quite striking to look at.

"May I venture to ask," inquired the chief clerk, "whether it is fifty-nine or sixty that your Majesty makes it?"

The King, however, retired in silence, being ashamed to say that, after all his efforts, he made it both.

"There is yet one more thing to be done," said the King to himself; "I will go to the Royal Calculating-Machine Department and ascertain from Professor De Organ if it is likely that out of thirty-six lovers not one should be of unobjectionable character, for I do not myself believe it is according to the Laws of Probability."

VI.

But, some time before all this had happened, the beautiful Princess had tied round the neck of the carrier-pigeon a fresh billet, addressed to Silversail, and consisting only of the word "Come!" The casement being reopened (for it had been shut soon after the bird's arrival), the carrier-pigeon flew off again, making straight for the sunset crimson, in the direction of the lighthouse. The beautiful Princess watched him till he was out of sight, and then dropped, kneeling, upon the faldstool, her head bowed upon her sweet white hands.

Whilst the King was hurrying to the Royal Statistical Department, the Princess, alone in her chamber, drew back the curtains and looked forth upon the bay, which was now calmer. The wind had softened, and a brilliant hunter's moon was in the sky. The Princess stood watching across the sea, with her eyes fixed upon the lighthouse. She opened the casement, and the night air came in with a sigh, and sprinkled her face and her bosom with light-falling foam. In an instant, a shallop flashed round the lighthouse corner, and a sail of silver shone, rocking and belling, in the moonlight. The bay lay steeped in the beautiful whiteness; the cliffs stood out beside her father's palace; on all the sea, as far as her eye could look, there was no other boat; and the moonbeams made a path across the water towards the shallop with the sail of silver, which lay rocking under the cliff where the lighthouse stood.

Everyone acquainted with etymology will perceive that this boat was the vessel of Silversail; but whether he was himself in the boat at the time the Princess was gazing upon it will appear in due course. Certain it is that the boat drew no nearer to the inlet, where the palace was built, but kept on rock, rock, rock, glitter, glitter, until the eyes of the Princess were weary with gazing. From her bed-room window, when she at last retired to rest, disappointed and heart-sick, she could still see the sail of silver beating like a visible bright pulse in the moonbeams; but no Silversail came; no, not even in her dreams.

VII.

When the beautiful Princess arose next morning she found there were fifty letters awaiting her, which, from past experience, and also from the fact that all offers of marriage for the Princess were, by Royal command, dropped into a particular box, and stamped with a particular stamp by the Royal Matrimonial Postmaster-General, she knew to be love-letters. Having had them arranged in a circle round the ottoman, she sat contemplating them as before, all of them being unopened, when her Royal father was announced, and immediately desired to know which of the fifty offers she proposed to accept. When the beautiful Princess again said "Neither," and the King, with suppressed anger, inquired the reason as politely as he could, the beautiful Princess made answer,

"Dear Sir, the writers of these letters are all of such high character that I cannot choose between them."

This put the King in a most serious dilemma, for, being a logician, he at once perceived that the alternative was accepting all the fifty, which would have been a contravention of the Royal Marriage Act. Requesting to look at the letters himself, he observed that the superscriptions were all exactly alike, and immediately drew off to consult the professor again, desiring to know if it was in accordance with the Laws of Probability that fifty suitors for a lady's hand should each be of exactly the same character and disposition. What puzzled the Princess was, however, that all the superscriptions appeared to be in the handwriting of Silversail himself.

VIII.

Impatient, as may naturally be supposed, for a solution of these mysteries, the beautiful Princess put on a dark green hood and stole out, by the way of the oleanders in the Royal garden, to a little cove on the shore, where she kept a private canoe, the most fairy-like looking thing you can imagine. Hastily glancing around the coast to make sure that she was not observed, the Princess put out timidly to sea, and rapidly paddled her way in the direction of the lighthouse. The bay was quiet, almost as smooth as her bosom, and scarcely more rippled than the bands of bright hair that caught the sea breeze in a net after it had kissed her forehead; nor was there another sail of any kind to be seen anywhere on the waters.

Now, if you should think it was an act of indecorum on the part of the Princess to go forth in this manner to meet one to whom she was engaged to be married, I must inform you, in the most decisive manner, that no such engagement had taken place, and that she had never even seen Silversail, though she had often received messages from him by the carrier-pigeon.

One day I met a lily walking along, and said to her, "Where are you going, lily?" and she answered, "To meet the rose."

Another day I saw a honeysuckle in a coppice climbing so fast that I could time her by my stop watch. "What are you climbing for?" I inquired. "To get to the top of the elm-tree," said she.

Yet, another day, I saw a rivulet making haste through a field by the seashore, and said, "What are you hurrying for?" to which the rivulet made answer, "To get to the sea."

The beautiful Princess was as innocent as the lily, the honeysuckle, or the rivulet; and soon she had paddled her canoe—the tide being in her favour—to the very side of the shallop under the lighthouse. Bright in the sun fluttered the silken flag of Silversail—a golden butterfly inwrought upon a ground of true-love blue, the Princess's favourite colour. So all seemed propitious, when the timid little

fairly canoe lay under the stern of the shallop. But on all the deck the Princess saw no sign of life. No creature spoke; no creature stirred; the little waves lapped against the bows of the ship in whispers. Then the Princess said aloud, holding her paddle across, and wondering at the silence,

"I am come."

As she spoke, she drew her hood over her face, half fearing to see. Before she had formed a second thought a monstrous arm was round her, and the Princess was snatched up on the deck of the shallop. Then, as soon as she was dropped down, panting and bewildered, she saw before her a swarthy, shaggy man, of hideous size and horrible strength, with huge round dull-grey eyes, in which there was neither motion, nor moisture, nor dilation; and a mouth which looked as if it might have been formed to devour, but had never been formed to speak. The carrier-pigeon was perched on his shoulder, and around his neck was the billet of the Princess, unopened. It was only for a moment or two that this dumb monster stood before her, tall as the mast, making a grimace of possession, and in another the mighty brute had lifted the anchor like a baby's toy and the shallop stood out to sea.

IV.

Impatient as Silversail had been to see the Princess with whom he had so long corresponded by means of the carrier-pigeon, he was of such a playful disposition that he could not resist the temptation to have a joke with her. Immediately on his arrival at the light-house point he had put off with all the crew, except the dumb helmsman (who was unpleasant at times, and not to be trusted), in the ship's jolly-boat, and had landed near the palace, just about the time at which the Princess's attention was so unfortunately taken up by her Royal father.

Proceeding to his hotel, he instantly wrote fifty love-letters with his own hand, and had them posted to the Princess; for, knowing that her politeness would not permit her to leave any one of them unanswered, he felt how agreeable it would be, previously to his marriage, to receive fifty different pledges of affection in her own beautiful handwriting. Feeling surprised the next morning that he received no answers, he nevertheless determined to wait until the afternoon post came in, and strolled out among the fir-woods, which sloped down to the shore, to beguile the time a little.

Now, although the Princess had fancied herself unobserved when she had put off for the ship in her own private canoe, she had been mistaken, as Silversail very speedily discovered. He had not been walking in the fir-wood long before he was accosted by an aged female, who was gathering sticks, and who, bidding him good-morrow in a free and somewhat malicious tone of voice requested him to cross her hand with a silver sixpence—laying such a stress upon the word silver that he felt sure she meant something, as, indeed, she did. When he had complied with her request, the woman grasped him by the wrist, and, by a short, steep path, through the fir-trees, led him down to the shore of the bay and pointed to the lighthouse with her skinny finger in the most alarming manner. Of course, Silversail noticed in a moment that his ship was gone; but it was not till after this aged crone had whispered something in his ear that he became aware of the full extent of his misfortune. And now he regretted that his playful disposition had led him to postpone a personal visit to the Princess. But, perhaps, this regret was ill-founded, seeing that his playful disposition was naturally connected with the bravery of his character, and that it was by no means certain that the King would have consented to the union, being very obstinate. What may be the result of the present complication you will never guess, and I have no space to devote to the alarms at the palace when the absence of the Princess Royal was discovered. I may just mention, however, that it was still found impossible to add up those columns in the Princess Royal's Royal Correspondence Ledger in a satisfactory manner; and that in the Royal Calculating-Machine Department the click of the wheelwork was heard night and day, the machines working full time, or rather extra time, upon the problem whether the departure of the beautiful lady was in accordance with the Laws of Probability or not.

X.

Being very wealthy, and having circular letters for all the banks, Silversail immediately chartered, at a high price, the most clipper schooner in the country, which was entitled the Wyvern, and, under the advice of the aged crone who has already been referred to, prepared to set sail in search of the Princess. In an incredibly short space of time the outfit of the ship and the men was completed; and on a most auspicious-looking morning all the population of the city might have been seen assembled in the harbour to witness the departure of Silversail. It is true the aged crone was not there; but nobody missed her, she being supposed to be always employed in gathering sticks in the fir-woods, and not to take any interest in social matters.

It may here be observed, this Silversail had said nothing to the King about his passion; and as, from motives of honour, the Princess's letters were kept unopened, the Monarch was not aware that Silversail himself had any but disinterested motives for going in search of the Princess, except, indeed, that he would naturally wish to recover a vessel which had a sail of silver to it. The Monarch loudly cheered the clipper vessel in question as she cleared the harbour, and there was not a dry eye in all the assembled multitude, so great was the excitement.

But, on the second day after the Wyvern's departure, when she was a good many leagues out of sight of land, the aged crone of whom we have before spoken was discovered by the second mate eating soaked biscuit in a large tub somewhere down below; I forget whether it was before the mast or after. Being brought before Silversail, and asked by him, somewhat sternly, to account for herself, she made answer,

"Young Sir, do you think nobody has lost anything but yourself?"

This was considered rather impertinent; but Silversail, with much forbearance, asked,

"Who is to pay for your passage?"

"I will work my passage," replied the woman.

You may well conceive what a burst of laughter followed this speech. "Ha! ha! ha!" roared the sailors. "Ha! ha! ha!" they roared again. "Ha! ha! ha!" they shouted in chorus, till they were exhausted. As soon as ever there was silence, the aged crone, who had all the time been muttering to herself, said aloud,

"I smell a storm!"

Now, as there was not a speck to be seen in all the heavens, this made the crew laugh again; but Silversail, who, though playful, was somewhat superstitious, bade the boatswain pipe all hands to quarters, and made preparations for doing battle with the elements, in case it should be necessary. Some of the sailors, too, were considerably impressed by observing that this old crone, though apparently unsocial, seemed very familiar with the seagulls, who once or twice came close up to her head and apparently croaked in her ears.

And so the Wyvern is sped upon her voyage, the silver-sailed shallop flying fast before, with the Dumb Monster at the helm, and the beautiful Princess in peril. If the aged crone was correct, it may be presumed that these vessels will shortly encounter a storm; but it would be idle to detain the reader with conjectures when I have no more space for facts, and must leave untold here the destiny of the Duab Monster, his subjugation by the beautiful Princess, the voyage of the Wyvern, and the extraordinary circumstances under which Silversail and the Princess were at last united. But, not to keep the reader in too painful suspense, it may be stated that an answer is shortly expected from the Royal Calculating-Machine Department to the question submitted to it by the King at the urgent instance of the disappointed suitors—namely, whether the incidents of the union of Silversail and the Princess were in accordance with the Laws of Probability. If not, the evidence will have to be sifted, in order that the fact may be disproved in the usual manner.

"BLIND MAN'S BUFF."

BY CLEMENT W. SCOTT.

EVERYONE owned that it was an unfortunate engagement. Frank Stephenson was not a bad fellow at heart, but his virtues were not apparent at first sight. His greatest delight on earth was to injure people's feelings. He was cynical, harsh, and antagonistic; and, in his hate of cant, was too fond of treading on people's toes. He should have married a strong-minded, impulsive, or clever woman—a woman who would stand no nonsense, and refuse altogether to be bullied; but, as is the way of the world, he gained the first blush of the heart of little Violet Vaughan, the daughter of a rich stockbroker, seventeen years old, and with a mind capable of being moulded, by a sensible man, into a decent shape.

Frank Stephenson had not a farthing; and Violet Vaughan would be ultimately, if all went well, an uncommonly good "catch." And people did say that the young man, who was of good family, who had been to Eton and Oxford, and was now studying for the Bar, was marrying the stockbroker's daughter for her money. Poor child! it was not her fault. Her mother had not an "h" in her composition, and her father was an illiterate, flashy, money-grubbing old "snob." Frank Stephenson liked old Vaughan's port wine, laughed at his stale jokes, and gave a certain air to his dinner-parties. Mrs. Vaughan loved to hear him relate his University experiences and public-school stories, and liked to have a well-dressed and educated gentleman at her receptions. And so the matter was settled. For the sake of his tone and his "talk" the imperious gentlemen were received into the stockbroker's sheepfold, and the little pet-lamb Violet was to be sacrificed and given over to the clutches of this rough, devouring wolf.

Violet Vaughan was too young and simple at the time the engagement was made to understand fully its importance. She had an idea that it was a grand thing to be engaged to be married, and she knew that the girls at the Montpelier Establishment at Brighton used to discuss that favorite topic "marriage" from morning till night. It would be a grand thing to write to her confidential friend, Mercy Teape, who was still at the Montpelier Establishment, and tell her all about her prospects, describing in high-flown language the exterior qualities of Mr. Frank Stephenson, who was by no means a bad-looking fellow. Of course she had her private moments of sorrow. Young, tender, and sensitive, she accepted the great Frank as the hero he had been made out, and, with a blind sort of devotion, looked up at him out of her big blue eyes as a slight Italian greyhound would look up at a shaggy retriever. She was frightened at his learning and experience, and listened to his anecdotes with eyes and mouth wide open. Notwithstanding all this, she pined for that tender softness that lies in some men's composition, and which some women value so highly; and the tears would often spring to her eyes at some rough remark of Frank's, or some instance of thoughtless, half-savage "chaff," which would be passed over by a man, but which to a sensitive woman is utterly incomprehensible, and jars terribly against her finer feelings. Frank and Violet had been engaged for over two years—the man was getting harder and more angular, and the woman, as she got older, more sensible and sensitive—when people first began to talk, and, having put two and two together, to decide that it was really and truly an "unfortunate engagement."

This was how matters stood when the Vaughans went down to spend a summer in Cornwall, and were joined by Frank Stephenson, who had begged permission to bring down with him and introduce one Claude Dormer, an old schoolfellow and college chum of Frank's. The characters of Frank Stephenson and Claude Dormer were as widely apart as the poles. They disagreed on almost every subject, but still they kept friends. The one was soft-hearted, tender, almost womanish in sentiment; the other was ignorant altogether of sentiment, and still they kept friends. Men of distinct sympathies may get on well together, but you cannot apply the same rule to man and woman.

Claude Dormer was a great success with the Vaughans. He had that wonderful charm that some men possess of making himself loved wherever he went. Tender and courteous to women, gentle and conciliatory to men, full of passion and artistic feeling, warm in argument but never overbearing, an admirable linguist and musician, and a thorough "gentleman," it was small wonder that Claude Dormer made his way and became popular. Frank Stephenson should have considered well before he introduced such a soft, insinuating companion into the Vaughan sheepfold. Frank Stephenson was, however, too self-confident to dread antagonism or rivalry. He looked upon Violet as his property—property which had been legally and fairly conveyed to him, and which it did not behoove him, now that he had secured it, to look after. This was not wise on the part of Frank Stephenson. He had not won Violet by any superior merits of his own. She had been knocked down to him, and he had made a good bargain; but year by year the property was increasing in value, and the owner was simply idiotic to allow any of his land to lie fallow.

The contrast between the two men was not happy for Frank. As Claude ingratiated himself with the Vaughans, Frank correspondingly sank in the scale. The more agreeable Claude made himself, the more cynical and disagreeable became Frank. Indeed Frank became absolutely "nasty." We all know the meaning of the word. He contradicted everyone, sneered at everything that was good and true, and, finally, vented his spleen upon poor Violet, who had hitherto borne nobly with two years' bad temper. At last Violet could stand Frank's waywardness no longer, and she soon gave signs of rebellion.

Claude's amiability in some way made up for the other's harshness. Not that Claude had actually made love to Violet Vaughan, but secretly and before either of them really knew it he had clung in a mysterious way round her heart. In his own mind Claude Dormer was debating the vexed question, whether it was a dishonourable thing to allow his thoughts and attention to wander towards the future bride of his friend. He knew that they did not get on well together; he knew that they were utterly unsuited to one another; but he knew also that Frank Stephenson was his old friend, and he thought of what the world would say. Claude Dormer knew that Frank Stephenson would break Violet Vaughan's heart, and yet he was unable to step in and ward off the calamity. He felt that every day he was becoming more and more attached to his friend's affianced wife, and he had a suspicion that his protestation would not be ill-received; but still he held his peace and said nothing. He knew that he ought to leave Cornwall at once; but as yet he had not quite sufficient strength for such a desperately honourable course. What would he have said or done if he could have seen Violet Vaughan kneeling night after night at her bedside, and praying that some means might be devised whereby she might be released from her plighted troth to Frank and allowed to give her whole heart to Claude?

Violet was as powerless in the matter as Claude. She had not the moral courage to confide in her parents, and she was afraid of Frank Stephenson. How many women, similarly circumstanced, have married, and lived "unhappily ever afterwards!" At any rate, Violet made up her mind to tell Claude to go his way. The explanation came at last, and it was a very bitter one on both sides.

Claude never knew how dearly he loved Violet until he had to learn from her own lips how very much better it would be for both of them if they were separated by miles of land or water, if needs must be. It was done in the most delicate and charming manner possible; indeed, so sweetly that it cut Claude to the heart to feel that his own vacillation had compelled such a determination on the part of the woman whom he had no right to love.

"And are we never to meet again?" he said.

"Perhaps it is better not," and then she half choked. "I cannot say that we are never to meet again. You are worthy a better woman than I shall ever be; but we cannot go on as we are going on now. I am bound to Frank and I will not go back from my word; not, indeed, that I think it is the happiest life for me, but that I believe I may, by some good chance, make him a happier man than he is."

"And would you sell yourself to him?"

"That is unkind and unworthy of you. I will do my best to make him a good wife."

"You are the grandest woman I have ever met," said Claude, "and God grant that I may live to do you some service yet, no matter how or under what circumstances we meet again."

"Will you leave England, then?" she half sobbed. "Will you go away, far away from me, where it will be impossible for me to call you back even if I felt inclined to do so?"

"I will leave England. But why not send for me if you require my aid?"

"I would do that," she said; "but I would rather not know where you are going; the temptation would be too great."

And so they parted. We have read of the heroism of martyrs and warriors, and of self-sacrificing and holy men, but it is a doubtful point whether keener tortures have been suffered than those mental agonies which Violet and Claude bore up against that night. Naturally they loved, and from the strictest sense of duty they parted. There was no show or affectation about their grief. Their love was known to themselves alone; to themselves they kept it, and by themselves they suffered for it.

Claude Dormer was suddenly summoned away from Cornwall, and only one person knew the secret of the summons. The Vaughans—*père et mère*—parted from their newly-made friend with sincere regret. Frank Stephenson parted from his old friend as he had done on many occasions for the last ten years—suspecting nothing from his sudden departure, and hoping to meet him again and very often; but Violet hid herself away from the rest as soon as she could, and then, in the silence of her own room, wept her heart out for the only man she had ever met whom she could have loved with all her heart and soul.

A dark cloud stole over the Vaughan family directly Claude Dormer went back to town. A stockbroker's fortune or ruin depends very frequently on the toss of a halfpenny. Mr. Vaughan certainly did not win the toss.

Claude Dormer had hardly sailed for San Francisco a week before Mr. Vaughan woke up one morning and found that he was a ruined man; and the news of old Vaughan's ruin had hardly reached Frank Stephenson's ears a week before he had determined to cut the Vaughan connection and Violet into the bargain.

Poor Violet! But Claude Dormer had sailed for San Francisco, and he had told no soul in England whether he was going.

The luxury of the life which Violet Vaughan had led by no means deadened the reality of her woman's nature. The ruin which had come upon them all was naturally an awful blow to the whole family. The women, as is very frequently the case, bore up against it better than the men. It is a terrible thing for a man advanced in years to begin life all over again; and on this account Mr. Vaughan took a longer time to awake from the dull, stupefying effects of the dreadful calamity which had come upon him and his, than did his daughter Violet.

The undeveloped energies of her lively nature were now fully aroused, and she was not long in making up her mind what course she should adopt. Now, if ever, she considered she should reap the good effects of the liberal education which her comparatively uneducated father had bestowed upon her. She determined that she would sink her pride and go out as a governess. Indeed, there was no pride to sink, for it was one of the proudest moments of her life to think that, though she could not with her own unaided energies support her father, mother, and brothers and sisters, she could at least take steps to relieve them of one part of their burden.

She thought, of course, of Frank Stephenson and all his treachery—of the man who had sworn to love her and tend her all his life, and who had deserted her like a coward in the hour of her extremest need; but she thought also of the life which she might have had to lead and of the misery from which she had been happily saved. She had been courted and made love to for her money; and she had been putting faith in and confiding in a man who would have married her and made both their lives a gross imposition and lie from beginning to end. Better go out as a governess and suffer the shame and humiliation of which she had heard and read than allow her heart to die out in her breast by the side of a man like Frank Stephenson.

She thought also, of course, of Claude Dormer; and now she was able without shame to make her contrasts between these two men. She knew how Claude would have acted; she knew at that very moment when she was thinking of him that, could she raise her voice and call out "Claude! Claude! come to my heart and rest where you should ever have been!" that he would have come from the very ends of the earth at her bidding. But she had sent Claude Dormer away, and she knew that she had acted rightly. This was her only regret.

"Oh! Claude, Claude, my own dear love," she would say to herself, "why did you go away and leave me, though I made you do so? Where are you now, and shall I ever see your face again?"

Violet Vaughan's grief was reserved for her own room. She would allow no tears or regrets of hers to increase the sorrow which she saw around her.

The promptitude and energy of her character were rewarded, and she obtained in a very short space of time an excellent engagement.

She had only two little girls to take care of, and their mother, a sweetly-dispositioned woman, took to her at once, and treated her like a sister.

In a few months they became sincerely attached to one another; and the quiet evenings they spent together, over their work, and music, and reading, when the little ones were in bed and asleep, were treasured hours indeed to poor Violet. It was on one of these eventful evenings that Violet learned, by the purest accident, that she was filling the situation of governess in the house of the sister of Claude Dormer. She started at the mention of his name, and the start did not escape the quick eye of Mrs. Morrison, who sat by her side. And then after that came the tender womanish tears, which sprang from her heart; and over these tears Mrs. Morrison learned of her love for her favourite brother, and of all Violet's self-sacrifice and worth. Mrs. Morrison made a resolution that night before she went to bed, and she prayed to God to aid her in her good work.

It is Christmas Eve, and the Morrises are keeping high holiday, as all good folks should at such a happy time. The little ones have got some other little ones, their friends, to make merry with them, and just now they are teasing their affectionate governess, Miss Vaughan, to consent to be blindfolded and make herself a child again, like the rest of them.

The game of blind man's buff has been started and insisted on by Mrs. Morrison, and, if the truth be told, she has herself suggested and supplicated for the binding of Miss Vaughan. Mrs. Morrison has been in a very uneasy and unsettled frame of mind the whole evening, and her frequent visits to the hall and the window of the darkened dining-room cannot surely be purposeless.

At last there are sounds of wheels.

"Thank God!" she says, and rushes to the door.

The game of blind man's buff is going on merrily enough upstairs, and Miss Vaughan has not succeeded in catching any of the active little folks and so releasing herself from bondage. So loud are the children's shouts, and so wild and boisterous their fun, that the sound of the wheels has not attracted their attention. And now the door opens, and Mrs. Morrison glides noiselessly in. She is not alone, but her fingers are on her lips, as a warning to the children not to betray her.

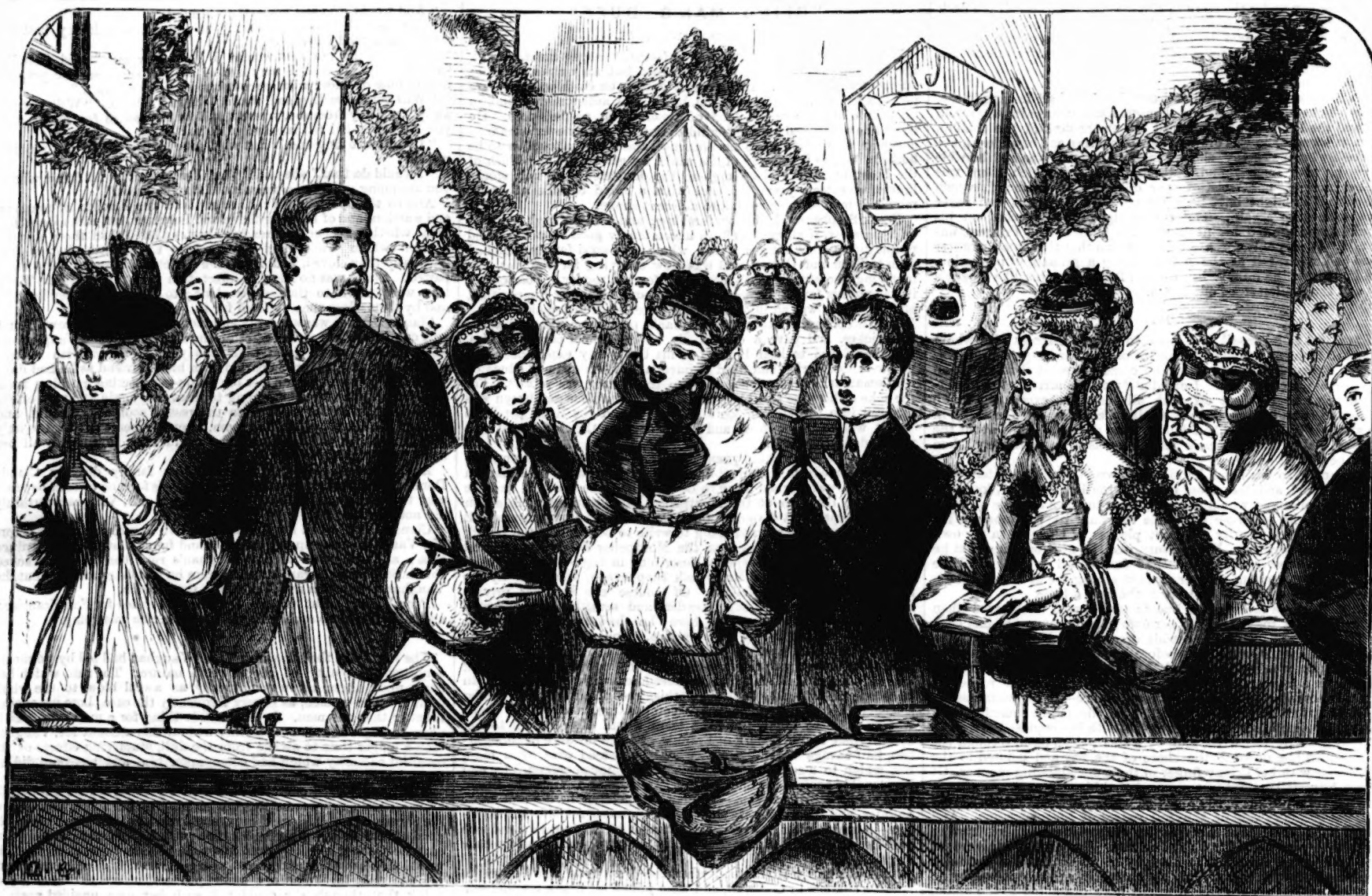
But the children cannot resist the temptation, and give a loud shout. There is a scuffle, and Miss Vaughan darts after her prey.

"Caught! Caught!" they cry.

Yes, caught indeed, this time.

The cambric bandage is wrenched from Violet Vaughan's eyes, and in another second she is in the arms of Claude Dormer.

Ah, happy, happy lovers! God bless you both! And God bless you too, kindly Mrs. Morrison, for bringing Claude Dormer back to his love on this thrice happy Christmas Eve!



THE CHOIR ON CHRISTMAS EVE.—(DRAWN BY ADELAIDE CLAXTON.)

HOW MR. BOB SCRAPER AND HIS FRIEND CHUBB SPENT THEIR CHRISTMAS DAY.

1. The two friends receive an invitation to dine at Elm Farm.
2. They meet at the railway station—losing the train by a minute.
3. They repair to a livery stable, determined to drive down.
4. They find the horse a jibber.
5. Backward plunge into a gravel-pit.

6. They escape with some slight injuries.
7. They are obliged to proceed on foot with their four-footed companion.
8. They lose their way; meet with a native, who, in answer to their inquiries, tells them that they must return five miles; take the second road to the right, the first on the left, and then inquire again.

9. They light their pipes and proceed.
10. They get into a snow-drift.
11. They get out again.
12. As night comes on they reach the farm, and are apprehended for burglars.
13. Captured and bound, they are taken in, recognised, and made welcome.



ADVENTURES OF BOB SCRAPER AND HIS FRIEND CHUBB ON CHRISTMAS DAY.—(DRAWN BY C. ROBINSON.)